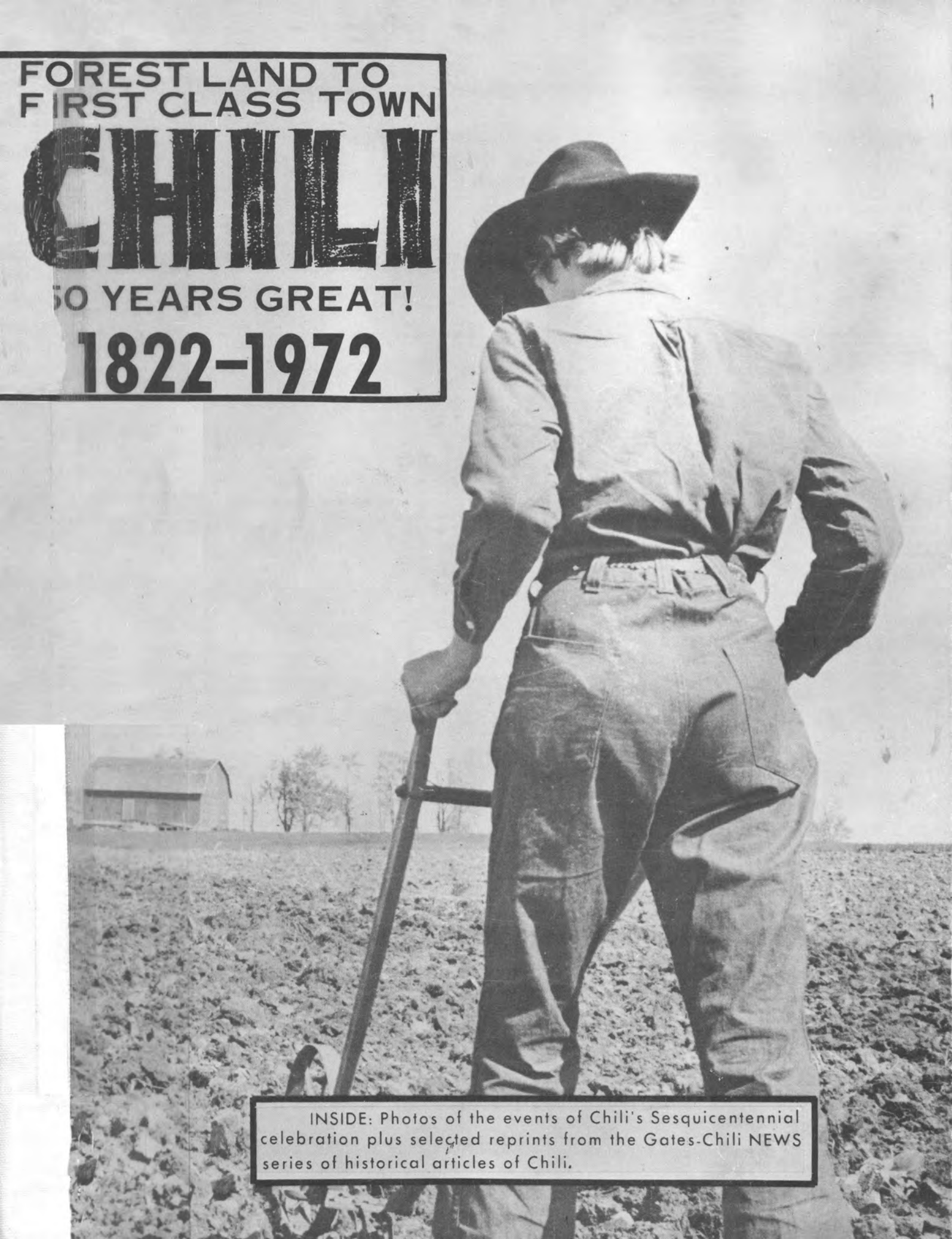
# FOREST LAND TO FIRST CLASS TOWN

# CHILI

## 50 YEARS GREAT!

## 1822–1972



INSIDE: Photos of the events of Chili's Sesquicentennial celebration plus selected reprints from the Gates-Chili NEWS series of historical articles of Chili.

This page is blank.

Pupils of the North Chili Vacation Bible School in 1932.

# ...from Chili's photo album of years passed.

Mr. and Mrs. Franz Mayer of Buckbee's Corners. Mayer was a blacksmith in early Chili. Photo taken around 1900.

The first appearance of the Chili Ladies Auxiliary Drill Team at a parade in Fairport on August 18, 1945.

***The photos appearing on the following pages were taken at the various events of Chili's Sesquicentennial Celebration by the Gates-Chili NEWS.***

## SESQUICENTENNIAL BANQUET
## Saturday, April 1, 1972
## Logan's Party House

The Chili Town Board members of 1972 re—enact a session of the Town Board of 1822. Present board members are Councilmen Tom Morrow, Don O'Connor, Supervisor Jim Powers, Councilmen Robert Criddle and Bill Gray.


## - *ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS* -

In January, 1972, the Gates-Chili NEWS began a series of articles dealing with the history of the Town of Chili. Because of the great response which the citizens expressed to the Gates-Chili News, it was decided to publish these articles in book form. Included in this publication are photos of many of the events of Chili's Sesquicentennial Celebration, plus selected reprints from the Gates-Chili News series. We would like to thank the following people for their help in compiling thr research which went into the writing of these articles: Mrs. Ruth McFee, former Chili Town Historian and Honorary Chairman of the Sesquicentennial Celebration; Mrs. Bernice Wilcox, Chili Town Historian, Mrs. Grace Worbois; Mrs. Louella Diegel; Mr. Martin Wehle; Mr. Dallas Davis; Mrs. Homer Emens; Mrs. Shirley Nixon; and the Buckbee family now residing in Syracuse, New York. Thanks also to the Rochester Public Library, Local History Division, and to the Rochester Democrat and Chronicle.

A special word of appreciation must go out to Mr. George Lusk and Mrs. Shirley Husted of the Monroe County Historian's Office for their assistance.

- - John Robortella
Gates-Chili NEWS

Mrs. Winsor (Barbara) Ireland and former Chili Supervisor Sam Kent enjoy the festivities at the dinner.

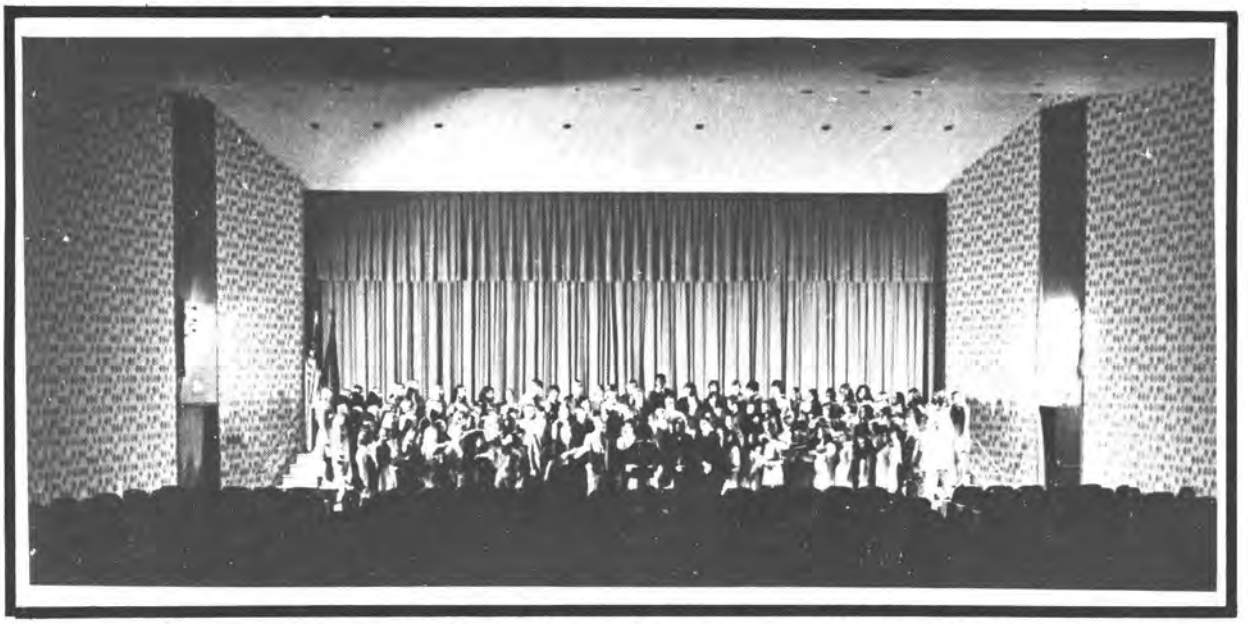
Mrs. Harriet Davis, Chili' oldest citizen, is introduced at the dinner.

## Sesqui Dinner, continued

The Hiltones entertain for the guests.

George Lusk, former Chili Supervisor, speaks to the guests.

# YOUTH CONCERT
## Saturday, May 6, 1972
## Gates-Chili High School Auditorium



High School students from Wheatland–Chili, Churchville–Chili, and Gates–Chili School Districts participated in a combined choir and band. This photo is a timed exposure of the combined choir performing in the G–C Auditorium.

# WALK FOR YOUTH
## Saturday, May 20, 1972

A portion of the 550 walkers register at the Chili Town Hall.

Winding down Chili Avenue, the walk begins Photo insert includes Chili Supervisor James Powers making the walk.

**Over 550 hikers completed the 10 - mile route raising nearly $6500. for the youth of Chili.**

Chili Councilman Don O'Connor and friends take a short rest on the route.

Chili notables before the walk: Councilmen Don O'Connor, Bill Gray, and Tom Morrow; Recreation Commission Chairman Virginia Miller, co-chairman of the walk "Gus" DePrez, and Chili Supervisor James Powers.

# HISTORICAL TOUR
## Sunday, May 21, 1972

Robert Wilcox explains the workings of a piece of mill machinery for a group of visitors. In this group is former Chili Supervisor Samuel Kent.

Miss Editha Hertz is a visitor to the Chili Mills on the tour. Here she stands before a portrait of her older sister, Gertrude, who operated the mill in the early 1900's

Linda Greenfield gave visitors a tour of the Victorian Doll Museum and Chili Doll Hospital on Buffalo Road in North Chili.

Thomas Morrow conducts a class session in the Cobblestone Schoolhouse for visitors.

The Fred Bean home on Sheffer Road was open for visitors.

*Stops on the Historical Tour of Chili included the Cobblestone Schoolhouse on Scottsville Road, the Fred Bean home, 95 Sheffer Road, the Norman Burgess home, 436 Paul Road, the Winsor Ireland home, 268 Archer Road, the Maple Grove farm, 795 Paul Road, the Davis home, 3760 Chili Avenue, the Chili Mills at Black Creek, the Stuart home, 61 Stuart Road, and the Chili Doll Hospital and Victorian Doll Museum at 4332 Buffalo Road.*

# ANTIQUE CAR SHOW
## Sunday, May 21, 1972
## Clifton, N.Y.

Antique and classic autos were on display in Clifton featuring autos and trucks of all models and years, and even a vintage 'cycle in the above photo.

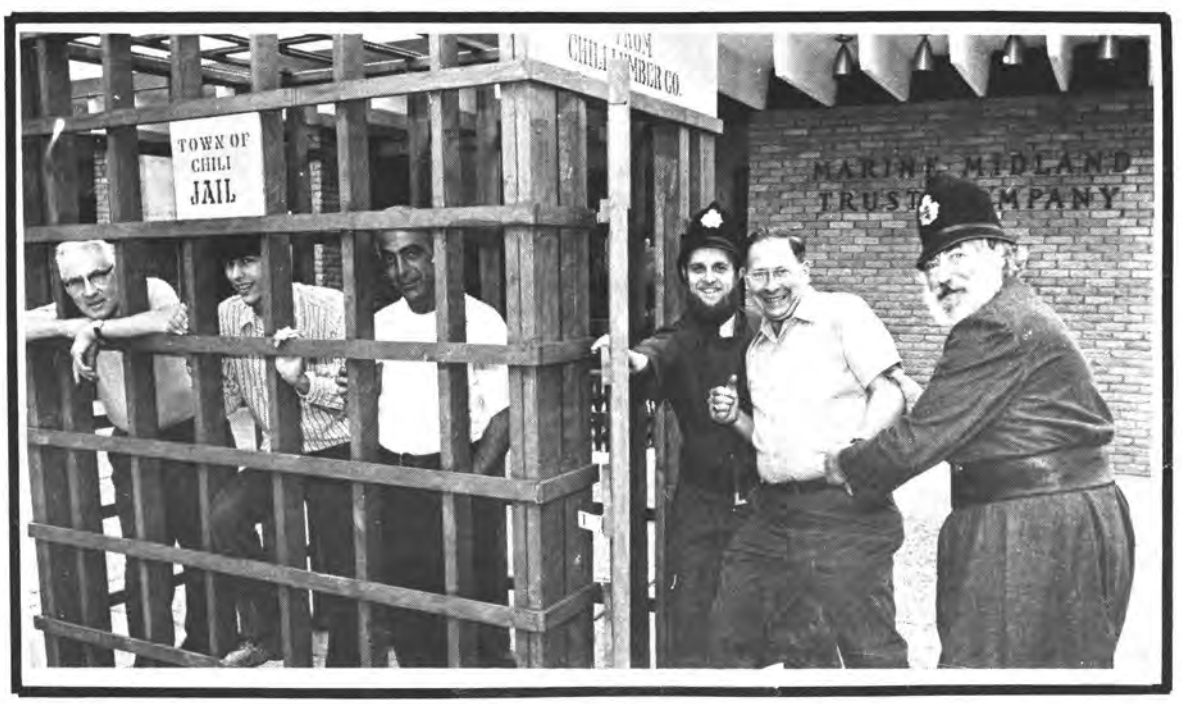
# CHILI WOMEN'S REPUBLICAN CLUB
## Special Open Meeting
## Monday, May 22, 1972 Parkminster Church

Before the meeting began, Mrs. David Steinmiller, Mrs. William Betteridge, Mrs. William Marx, Mrs. Frank Disney, and Mrs. Everett Vail paused for a photograph. Mrs. Disney, an interior decorator, spoke to over 50 ladies at the meeting.

# 1822 FASHION CONTEST
## Tuesday, May 23, 1972
## First Baptist in Chili

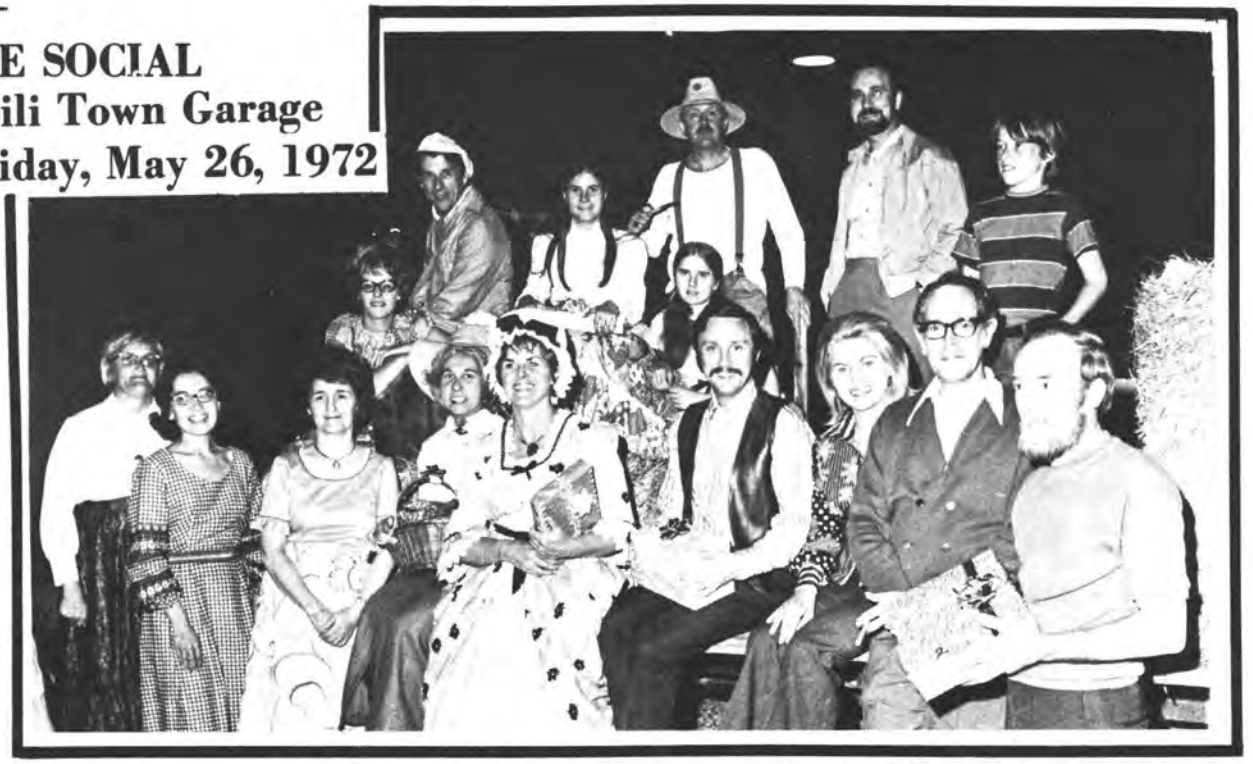
**Competing in the fashion contest are these Sesqui–Belles in the latest styles of 1822.**

---




**This was a familiar scene during the celebration week at the Chili Paul Plaza, as the Sesqui–Police arrested any man without a beard or Sesquicentennial Button.**

# PIE SOCIAL
## Chili Town Garage
## Friday, May 26, 1972



Those attending the Pie Social pause before the auction begins; lunches prepared by the ladies were sold to the highest bidder.

## Events of Saturday, May 27, 1972 :

# ANTIQUE SHOW
## Chestnut Ridge Elementary School

Visitors to the exhibits found hundreds of antiques, like the clocks in the photo on the right.

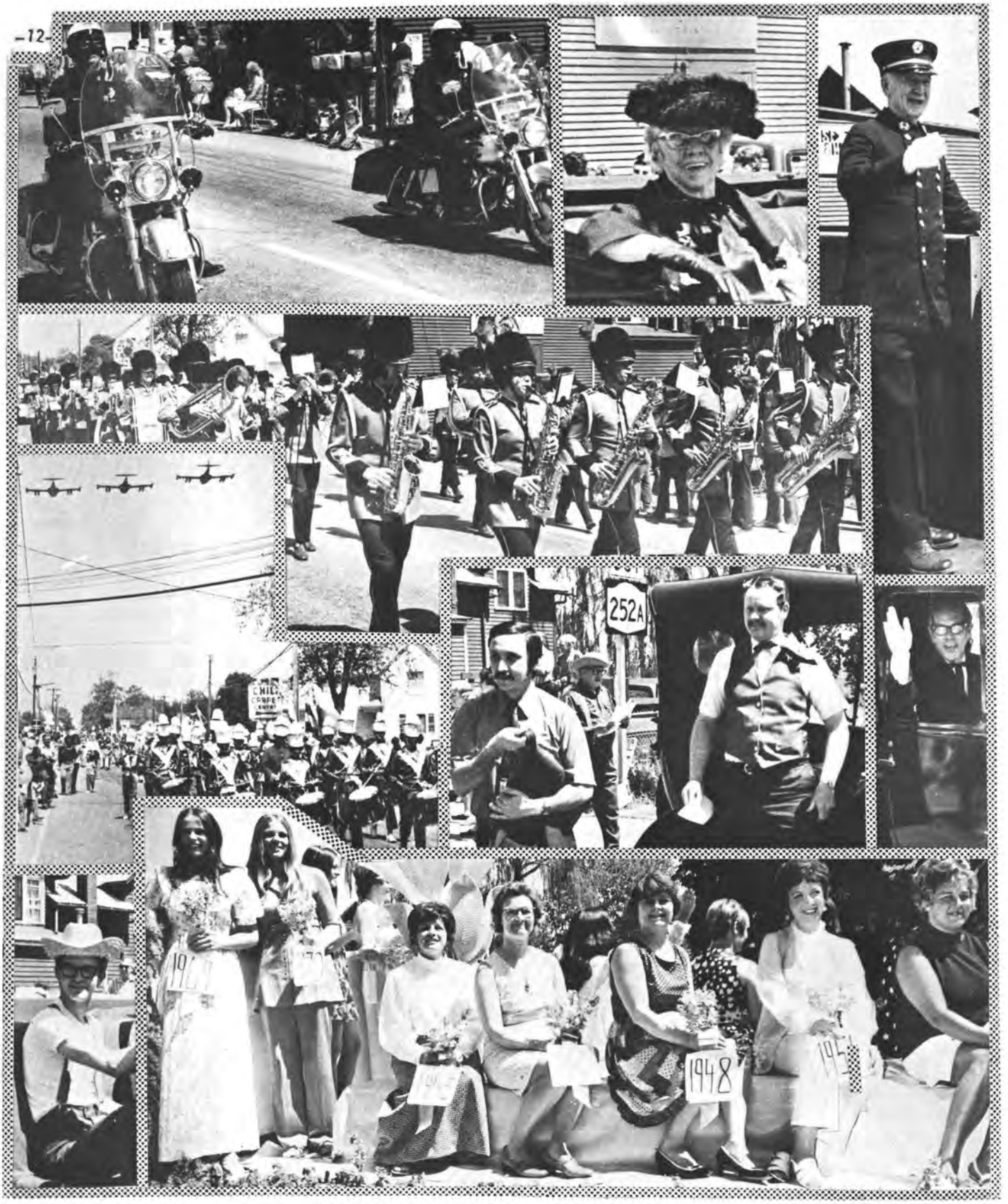
# BAZAAR
## Town Hall grounds

A clothesline art show was sponsored by the Chili Art Group at the bazaar.

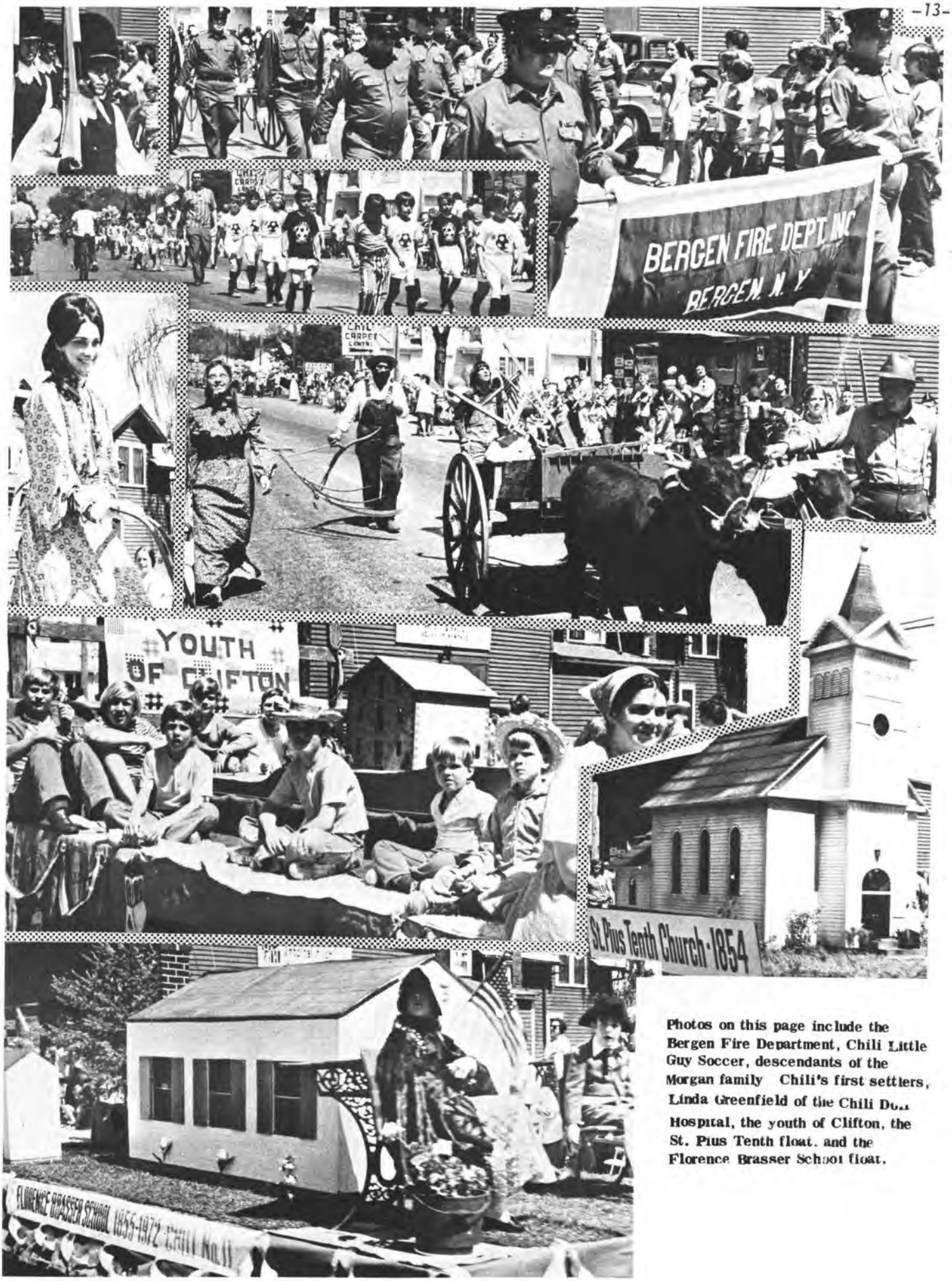
A glass-blowing demonstration was given inside the town garage during the bazaar hours.

# SESQUI PARADE
## Chili Avenue

George Lusk, former Chili supervisor, rides to the reviewing stand in the parade. Mr. Lusk narrated the event. He is riding representing Mrs. Ruth McFee, Honorary Chairman of the Sesquicentennial Celebration, and former Chili Town Historian. Mrs. McFee, due to illness, could not be present at the parade. A montage of photos from the parade appears on the following two pages:




The montage method of photo layout was used to enable more photos of the parade to be publish than would have been using conventional layout techniques. Photos on this page include the Monroe County Sheriff's Deputies leading the march, Mrs. Harriet Davis, Chili's oldest living citizen, John Steeves, Sr., Chili' first fire chief, bands marching in review, Chili Councilmen Bill Gray, Tom Morrow, and Robert Criddle, a fly—over of Air Force jets, and Chili's Harvest Queens, past and present.

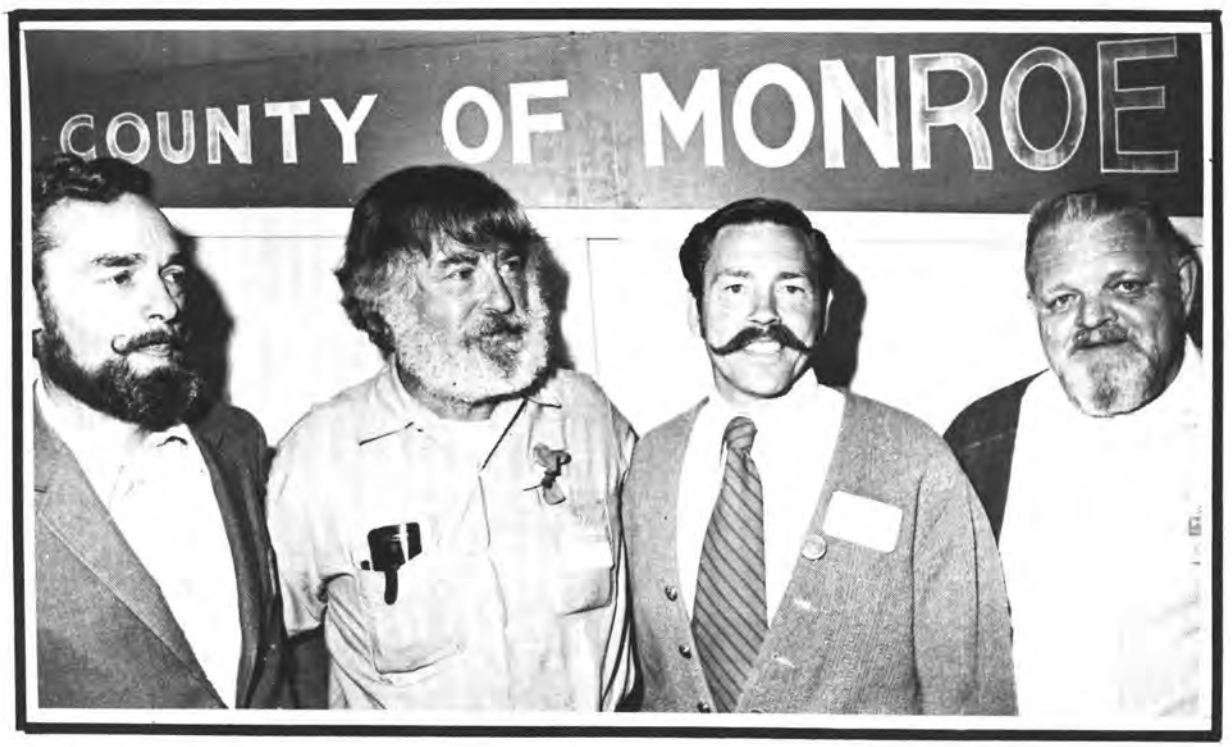



Photos on this page include the Bergen Fire Department, Chili Little Guy Soccer, descendants of the Morgan family Chili's first settlers, Linda Greenfield of the Chili Doll Hospital, the youth of Clifton, the St. Pius Tenth float, and the Florence Brasser School float.

# MONROE COUNTY PARKS BAND CONCERT
## Town Hall Grounds

The Monroe County Parks Band entertains to over 200 listeners on the town hall grounds.

# BEARD CONTEST
## Town Hall Grounds

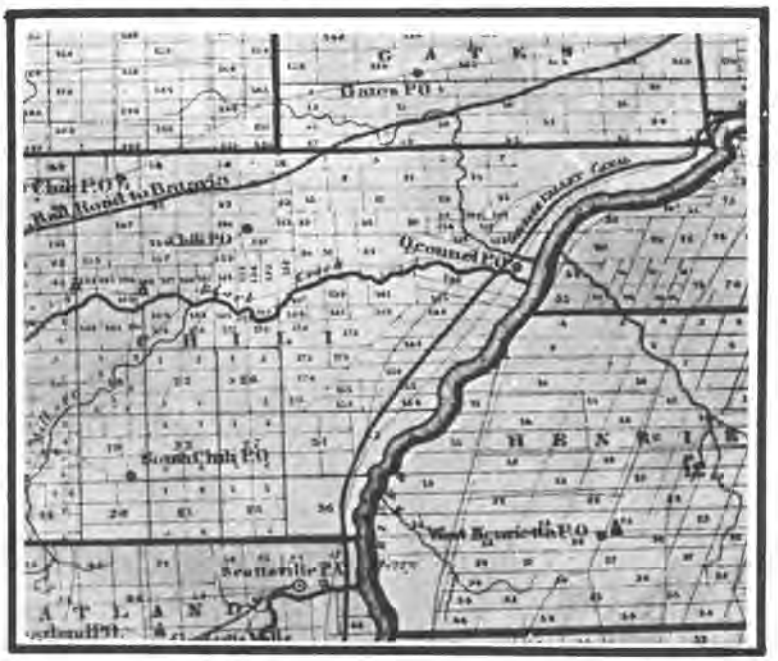



The best of the beards: George Gould, Best half–beard; Bob Sales, Best full beard; Edward Strader, Best moustache; Henry White, Best goatee.

***The following articles are selected reprints from the Gates-Chili NEWS series of historical articles of Chili published January, 1972 - May, 1972.***

# CHILI - 150 Years Great!

## Background into the pioneer days.




**Portion of a century—old map of Monroe County detailing Chili.**

February 22nd. The traditional day of George Washington's birthday, but an even more important date in the Town of Chili's history - the date an official act was passed in the New York State Legislature which divided the Town of Riga, County of Monroe, into the Town of Chili - The year was 1822.

In the year 1779, General John Sullivan was sent by President George Washington with a large force of Continental troops, to subdue the Seneca Indians. The soldiers destroyed the Indian villages, apple and peach orchards, and gardens of corn, squash, and beans. These drastic measures made the settlement of the Genesee Country possible.

Oliver Phelps, in 1788, negociated the treaty at Buffalo Creek which released the Indian claims to 2.6 million acres of land in Western New York. With Nathaniel Gorham, Phelps led a group of investors who purchased the land from Massachusetts. The Indians had originally refused the sale of land west of the Genesee, but Phelps prevailed upon them to give a strip 12 miles wide and 28 miles long for a mill.

The Town of Northampton was organized in 1797; it included all the land west of the Genesee River. By that year, the Shaeffer family had become the first permanent pioneer settlers in the region west of the Genesee; this land has become known as part of the Genesee Country.

Divisions then were made in the great expanse of Northampton. Parts became known as East and West Pulteney named after the purchaser, Sir William Pulteney. Riga was formed on April 8, 1808. From an area 4 miles east of Riga center, the Town of Chili was formed officially on February 22nd, 1822.

The first town meeting in Chili didn't convene until April 2nd, 1822, at the home of James Coleman. Joseph Sibley was the first supervisor, with Joshua Howell as Town Clerk. Three assessors were named: Benjamin Bowen, Joseph Davis, and Daniel Franklin, Jr. Commissioners of Highways were William Wooden, William Holland, George Brown, and John Wetmore. There were two men named as Overseers of the Poor - Joseph Thompson and Joshua Howell; two men named as Commissioners of Schools - Isaac Burritt and Bukley Gillette, and three named as Inspectors of Common Schools - Daniel Bassett, Alfred Scofield, and Pliney Fields.

At that first meeting, Thomas Sheldon, Daniel Jameson, Moses Sperry, and Eben Burnham were named constables.

The first settlement in the area we know as Chili was established by Joseph Morgan in 1792. The first child born in Chili was Joseph Wood in 1799. A distillery built in 1796 by Steven Peabody was the first industry of which Chili could boast. James Chapman established the first store in 1807 and James Cary built the first of Chili's many mills.

In 1825, Chili had a population of 1,827. Early settlers included Andrew Wortman, Colonel Josiah Fish and son Libbeus, Jacob Widener and his sons Samuel, Jacob, Abraham, William and Peter.

Joseph Cary, Lemuel and Joseph Wood, Samual Scott, Joshua Howell, Benjamin Bowan, John Kimball, Daniel Franklin, and George Stottle are also listed as the earliest settlers.

In 1806, a schoolhouse was erected north of Black Creek and one mile west of Chili Center. Early Post Offices were located in North Chili, and Clifton. The first tavern was opened by Elias Streeter on Union Street in 1811.

Joseph Sibley operated a milling business on Black Creek vest of the Buckbee's Corners area. Two houses, one built of cobblestones, were constructed by Sibley. Records indicate he lived in this region in the 1830's.

Moses Sperry, in 1838, was

**Please turn page**

Cornelius Nichols, photographed around 1890. He served as Chili Supervisor for 6 years, and town clerk for 11 years; he also served for a time as postmaster.

Plowing snow a foot at a time on Golden Road is Harry Allen, who worked for Mr. William Graham; photos circa 1930.

**Continued from preceeding page**

the first Chili Supervisor to serve as Chairman of the Monroe County Board of Supervisors.

By 1838, Chili was composed of 14,636 acres of improved land and 12,764 acres of unimproved land. The valuation of real property was $446,485 and personal property valued at $17,850. There were 225 militia and 542 electors.

In the 13 school districts, classes were held on an average of eight months per year. 771 pupils were taught at a cost of $307.18 or about 50 cents per pupil.

Following are the minutes of Chili's first Town Board meeting:

In conformity of an Act of the Legislature of the State of New York, the inhabitants of the Town of Chili met at the house of James Coleman in said town in the County of Monroe and State aforesaid on the 2nd Day of April, A. D. 1822, and after being duly organized made choice of the following persons to file the respective offices attached to their names, and passed the following resolves:

Joesph Sibley, Alfred Scofield and William Wooden, Esq., presided --

Joseph Sibley - Supervisor.

Joshua Howell - Town Clerk.

Voted to have but three assessors: Benjamin Bowin, Joseph Davis, Daniel Franklin, Jr.

Commissioners of Highway: William Wooden, William Holland, George Brown, John Wetmore.

Overseers of the Poor: Joseph Thompson, Joshua Howell.

Commissioners of Common Schools: Isaac Burritt, Bukley Gillette.

Inspectors of Common Schools: Pliney Fields, Daniel Bassett, Alfred Scofield.

Voted to give the Collector 4 percent for collecting. Benjamin Bowen named collector.

Voted to have four Constables: Thomas Sheldon, Daniel Jameson, Moses Sperry, and Eben Burnham.

Voted that a lawful fence be 5 feet high. No hole within 2 1/2 feet of the ground to exceed six inches.

Voted to raise double the sum for the school fund in Town that is received from the State fund.

Voted that fifty dollars be raised for support of the poor.

Voted that a penalty of 4 dollars be imposed on any person or persons suffering his, her, or their ram to run at large from the 1st Dav of September to the 20th Day of November this year.

Voted that the surplussage of taxes in the hands of the Supervisor go into the poor fund.

Voted that a fine of one dollar be imposed on any person or persons suffering a Canada thistle to seed on his, her, or their farm or in the road adjoining, that is one dollar for each and every stalk.

Voted that a fine of 25 cents. for each and every stalk be imposed on any person or persons suffering any Burdock of Tory weed to seed on his, her, or their farm or in the road adjoining.

Voted that the following persons by overseers of highways in the road districts annexed to their names being numbered as formerly when connected with Riga:

(1) Joseph Morgan, (2) John T. Brown, (3) Henry P. Culver (4) Benjamin Derby, (5) Isaac Lacey, (6) Elisha Sheldon, (7) John S. Williams, (12) Simeon Simmons, (17) Daniel Bassett, (19) Thomas Streeter, (20) Abraham De Forest, (21) Joshua Howell, (22) Ebenezer Mudge, (23) Joseph Sibley, (34) Israel Phillips, (35) Joseph Davis, (36) Leander Hamlin, (37) Elias Streeter, (39) Daniel H. Widener, (41) George Brown, (42) Nathan Bassett, (43) John Everts, (48) Dan Tyler, (49) James Brown, (50) Isaac Vorhies, (51) Levi Hilton, (53) Daniel Peck.

Voted that overseers of highways be fence viewers.

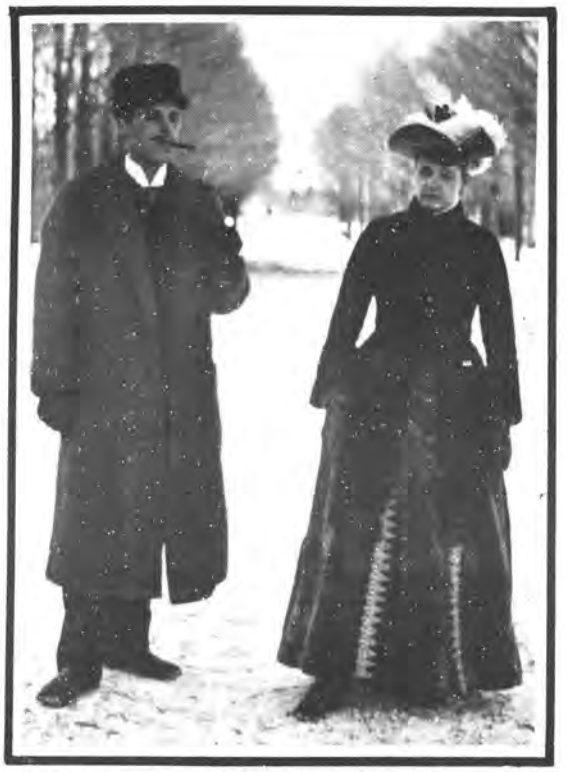
Voted that this meeting be adjourned to the house of Benjamin Bowen on the first Tuesday of April next at 9 o'clock in the morning.

The following is an added

note to these minutes: At a meeting of the Supervisors and Overseers of the Poor of the Towns of Chili and Riga, convened at the house of James Coleman in Chili, agreeable to previous notice, the poor persons consisting of Lydia Butten and her two children were distributed in the following manner:

The Town of Chili is to keep support and maintain the said Lydia Butten and her youngest child, and have in consequence received the whole of the poor funds remaining unexpended.

The Nichols family photographed around 1890 on the porch of their home in Chili Center. Two children are C. Arthur Nichols II and his sister, Ruby.



The Reverend C. Patterson and his wife on what is now Chili Avenue near Chili Center; photo taken around 1890.

The Hauslauer log cabin on Reed Road. Chili. Mary, Louise, and George Haslauer are in photo taken in the late 1800's.

# Chili's Oldest Citizen
# Harriet Stowe Davis

During the celebration of the sesquicentennial of a town, those citizens who have lived their entire lives within that town are recognized for their efforts towards making that town a good place in which to live.

Following is an article concerning the oldest living resident of Chili; one who has lived in the town since her birth.

She is Mrs. Harriet Davis, born in a house at the corner of Davis Road and Union Street in 1874 and still residing in Chili today at the Davis home on Chili Avenue near Union Street. She will be 98 years young on June 15th of this year!

Her father, James Stowe, and mother, Lucy Hutton Stowe, arrived in the United States by sailing ship from England. That trip took six weeks. They settled across from the Presbyterian Church at the corner of Stottle Road and Chili Avenue in the year 1854, or shortly thereafter.

The Stowe's had eight children: Will, George, Frank, James, Isora, Cora, Lucy, and Harriet. Harriet was the youngest, born in 1874.

Mrs. Davis noted that a gypsy had come to the Chili area at the time Isora was born and provided the infant with this unusual name.

Always living within one mile of her birthplace in Chili, Mrs. Davis was educated in the schoolhouse which was located on Union Street across the road from the present cemetery adjacent to the North Chili entrance to the Western Expressway.

Harriet Stowe became the wife of Mr. Fred Davis in 1898 and in the years which followed, had two children, Dallas and Lucy. Lucy Davis Voorheis has since passed away; Dallas resides at the Davis home, the fifth generation of the Davis family in Chili.

Mrs. Davis recalls the past vivdily. She remembers how many of the people would travel by horse and buggy to Nichols Hall in Chili Center for dances. Cornelius Nichols and his wife would serve oyster dinners for $1.00 Mrs. Davis recalled her friends also had a thimble club which met at the homes of the members. Some of the names she recalls from those meetings include Mamie Gruendike, Lettie Gruen, Alice (Sperry) Miller, Esther Gerard, Sarah Miller, and Jennie Stryker

"We did more visiting than fancy needlework!" Mrs. Davis said.

Occasionally, the Davis family would travel to the National Hotel in Rochester for dinner. If they "felt rich," they would pay a quarter to board their horse, Mrs. Davis remembered.

There are hundreds of events and celebrations Mrs. Davis recalls from her near-century living in Chili. She remembers the Callithumpian Parades held in Clifton, during which bands would perform, floats would be drawn in the parade, and usually a politician

**Harriet Stowe Davis**

**Mr. and Mrs. Fred Davis, photographed in the early 1960's. Mr. Davis passed away at the age of 90.**

would speak.

She also recalls how she and her family would watch the building of the West Shore Railroad in the area.

One of the events Mrs. Davis remembers most is the construction of the barn on the property on which she now resides at 3760 Chili Avenue. The barn was a marvel at the time of it's construction, and farmers from throughout the county travelled to the Davis home to see it. It has three stories, and at the time was considered to be a great labor-saver. This was due to the fact that grain could be loaded directly from the barn onto a wagon. This was a great innovation in the early days of Chili. The grain was then taken to the Clifton mill, ground into flour, and drawn by team to Braddock's Bay where it was shipped to ports as far away as England.

Mr. and Mrs. Davis were members of the Chili Grange, and members of the First Methodist Church, then located on Union Street near Chili Avenue. Today, this church has been torn down; all that is left is the cemetery located at the entrance to the Western Expressway from Union Street.

One of the attributes which is mentioned about Mrs. Davis is that she has never missed voting in an election since women were given that right by Constitutional amendment. She is also proud of the fact that she is a member of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union.

Mr. Fred Davis passed away at the age of 90 in the 1960's.

Mrs. Davis is a person who has enjoyed every minute of life. Today, at 97, she suffers only a partial hearing loss.

She has seen West Chili grow from rural farms to subdivisions and from dirt roads to paved expressways. She has seen travel by stagecoaches to railroads, by automobiles to aircraft. To learn of the world aound her, she has read newspapers, heard radio, and through television, has seen man walk on the moon.

A very remarkable woman - Mrs. Harriet Davis, the oldest citizen of Chili.

A family portrait of the Stowe family. Mrs. Harriet Stowe Davis is sitting on the right with her parents and seven brothers and sisters.

This photo of the Davis home was taken shortly after the barn was constructed. The house on the left has since been replaced with the home which still stands today.

The Davis home today. This Victorian house was constructed after the first home was destroyed by fire.

# CLIFTON, N. Y. 14431
# A Brief History

Situated in rolling countryside, the hamlet of Clifton.

Nestled in the rolling countryside within the Town of Chili is the hamlet of Clifton. The small community has a service station, a post office, a church, a fire department, and about 53 families. What the community lacks is the fervor of trucks, busses, and the other assorted ills of a large population.

Located south of the intersection of Chili Avenue and Union Street, Clifton is away from the sight and sound of expressways and heavily travelled highways. The hamlet has the aura of a time passed; walking the quiet streets gives the impression that 1972 has never come. Except for the electric lights and a few passing autos, the feeling is that of the early 1900's. Clifton was not always a quiet, little town. It once boasted three sawmills, gristmills, blacksmith shops, a distillary, a foundary, and many thousands of acres of land farmed by the early settlers.

The first mill was established in 1807 by J. Carey and Comfort Smith. By 1811, the third mill had been constructed by Jacob Cole; Clifton was on it's way.

Also known as "Hardscrabble" and "Graball," many of Clifton's residents of 1972 are direct descendants of the early pioneers. Anon Harmon was one of twelve children who moved to the hamlet from Massachusetts; he purchased 300 acres of land; today, the Harmon family name is still evident in the area.

Henry Burdett, in 1847, established a sawmill run by steam on Clifton Road; the building is still standing and descendants Lloyd and Emery Burdett are still residents of Clifton.

The leading industry in Clifton was Green's Nursery by the year 1875. Founded by Charles A. Green on what is now the Chili-Riga Town Line Road over 200 acres were covered with all varieties of fruit trees. At one time, 135 men worked at the nursery; the average pay was $40.00 per year.

In 1851, Clifton received world - wide recognition. Rawson Harmon II exhibited 35 varieties of wheat at the First International Exhibition in London, England. First prize for flour from wheat ground by Anon Harmon at his Clifton Mill was awarded at the exhibition.

The village was a direct stage route from Nunda and Olean to Rochester, and a tavern and inn were constructed in 1812 at what is now Clifton and Wheatland Center Roads. In 1880, a railroad was started which planned to run through Clifton; some work on the project was started, but the railroad was never finished

In 1932, the men of Clifton formed a fire department and joined in with the Chili Fire Department as Company #4. Incorporated in 1934, and chart-

Church in Clifton, now modern with aluminum siding.

ered in 1935, the Clifton group broke away from the Chili Fire District to form their own fire department. The ladies auxiliary was formed in 1946. Men who were the first active firemen of Clifton included Wallace Coyle, Sam Frazier, Harry Newman, Charles Emens, Lloyd Burdett, Fred Wickins, Sherman Fisher, John Wickins, George Potter, William Heffer, James Hensby, George Coyle, William Horton, and Emery Burdett. The first carnival raised $180.95 The carnival is still an annual event in Clifton. Today, the Clifton Fire Department has four pieces of apparatus to provide fire protection to that area.

The Chapman family is still represented in Clifton today. James Chapman opened up the first store in the town in 1807. Today, Mrs. Lois Chapman serves as postmistress, a position she has held for 22 years. The first postmaster in Clifton was Edwin Sickles appointed in 1889; in 1889 Elmer Oliver took over; he was replaced in 1894 by Benjamin Smith. George Emens and his wife ran the post office in 1898, replaced by Oliver Boyce in 1915. William and Abbie Heffer had the job in 1925; Lyle Miller in 1940; Gordon Montgomery in 1946; and Mrs. Chapman took over in 1950. Today, the post office is run out of the Chapman home and services 53 families.

A town is more than just dates and times; a town is people. And in the early days of Clifton, the people had to help each other in time of need, but really got together in time of celebration.

On July 4th, 1905, one of the biggest celebrations every held took place in Clifton. It was called the Callithumpian Parade and events such as baseball games, foot races, etc., were held. The parade featured just about everyone in the town, and following the march, the Honorable John Palace of Brockport was guest speaker. There are some residents of Clifton today who remember July 4th, 1905 vividly.

Doctors were scarce in the early days, and many hours passed while a family waited for a doctor to be summoned. Mattie Emens, in the early 1900's, served as "medical consultant" in Clifton until a doctor arrived! She was a midwife, and people say she delivered as many babies as any doctor had. She also prepared the dead for burial.

A complete history of even such a small hamlet as Clifton would be impossible to publish in a booklet this size. A complete history of Clifton is included in a paper entitled "A History of Clifton, New York" written by Mrs. Homer Emens; a copy is on file in the Chili Public Library.

The hamlet of Clifton has never been incorporated; it is not a village or town; it has no officers.

"The town has been held together by the fierce loyalty of it's inhabitants," writes Mrs. Emens in her history of Clifton; "names like Hosmer, Heffer, Coyle, Emens, Sickles, Widener, Betteridge, Burdett, and Chapman are still on mailboxes today as they were over one hundred years ago."

"The common spirit is of the highest caliber. If a job needs to be done, everybody pitches in and works very hard. This is the secret of Clifton," writes Mrs. Emens in the last paragraph of her history; "Clifton will never become a ghost town as so many small towns do. The closeness and cooperation are too deeply ingrained for these people to ever allow Clifton to disappear from the face of the earth."

**Lloyd and Emery Burdett, operators of Clifton's service station since 1922. Station is in background.**

# A Name Not Forgotten
# Buckbee's Corners

Through the years, areas in Chili with unusual titles or nicknames have vanished with progress. Many areas took on the name of a family who first settled there. One such area within the Town of Chili was known for over one hundred years as Buckbee's Corners; this spot is marked by a flashing light over the intersection of Chili Avenue and Union Street.

This section of the western portion of Chili was named for the Buckbee family, who settled here in the early 1800's. The family is of Welsh descent, first immigrating to the United States in 1710. Settling in the Connecticut Valley, some of the family members moved to Statsburg-On-Hudson, Glens Falls, and Black River near Watertown.

According to the Buckbee family tree, a Gilbert Buckbee (1794-1875) is listed with five children: Jane Ann (1822-1909), Jerome(1833-1863),Julia (1836-1866), Israel (1821 - date of death unknown), and Mahlon (1818-1893).

Of these children, Jerome, with his wife Lucy, decided to move westward into Ohio or Wisconsin. They began their trek across the State of New York in the early 1800's. As they travelled through the area now known as Chili, disease struck the travellers. It was possibly "Genesee Fever" which overtook these hardy pioneers, and it was this strain of disease which prompted them to end their trip west and settle in Chili.

Jerome and Lucy Buckbee had three children, two girls and a boy. Their names were not recorded on the family tree and were lost when older members of the Buckbee family passed away.

Other members of the Buckbee family soon settled in this area. Jesse Buckbee's name turns up frequently in old town records. He is listed on an 1836 assessment roll as owning 124 acres of land, and between the years 1826 to 1835 held such town offices as overseer of the poor, highway overseer, commissioner of highways, and justice of the peace.

The name Buckbee Corners was coined after Jesse Buckbee gave land for the Buckbee Corners Rural Cemetery; some of the original headstones from this cemetery may be seen today in the cemetery at the corner of Chili Avenue and Union Street

As the population of rural Chili increased, many settled in the Buckbee's Corners area. And in 1822, Chili's first Town Board meeting was held at a home in the vicinity. Town minutes indicate the home was that of James Coleman.

In March, 1832, the First Methodist Episcopal Church was organized in the Buckbee Corners area with 33 members. Reverend John Widen was the first pastor of the congregation. In 1836, a brick church was constructed on the hill one-half mile south of the Chili railroad station off Union Street This church was razed in 1850, with the bricks used in the construction of a farm house west of Chili Center, the Nichols-Ruflin house. A new frame structure was erected a year or so later, and the congregation worshipped there until about 1912, when the church united with the North Chili Methodist Church.

The First Methodist Episcopal Church, now gone from the Buckbee Corners area.

This church was located on Union Street near the present entrance to the Western Expressway. It has been razed, also. All that is left to remind people of the First Methodist Episcopal Church is the cemetery near Chili Avenue and Union Street.

Another familiar name of the Buckbee Corners area is that of William Combs. He lived in a home across the street from the Methodist Church, and owned between 50 and 60 acres of land by what is now Brookview Drive. He had a barn, sheds, and a chicken house on the northwest corner of Chili Road and Union Street.

Franz Meyer, a German immigrant to the Chili area, ran the blacksmith shop in Buckbee Corners. Other names of residents of this colorful Chili area include Lee Downs, who built the house next to the church cemetery; Seth Widener who lived in a brick house in the vicinity; Foster Wood who lived in the third home west of the corners, and Bert, Sam, and Ralph Feeley who resided in the area.

Perhaps almost affectionately known as Buckbee Corners, this name was not to stay with the area.

Through the efforts of Mr. Dallas D. Davis, who still resides on Chili Avenue near Union Street, the town board was petitioned to change the name of this section of Chili from Buckbee Corners to West Chili.

The petition presented to the Chili Town Board on July 1st, 1934 stated

"....We the undersigned, residents, property owners and taxpayers of that section of the Town of Chili generally known as "Buckbee Corners" do hereby request and petition your Honorable Body to officially name and designate said section of the Town of Chili as " West Chili ", Monroe County, New York, for the following reasons:

"The name "Buckbee" was never officially given to this section but originated through general usage, as a family by the name of Buckbee first settled on one of the four corners of the section... the name Buckbee Corners may have served without much inconvenience in the early part of the 19th century when there were few inhabitants in this section, but, today, this thickly populated area, intersected by one of the main thorough fares of the State requires, we believe, a more easily pronounced and spelled name than Buckbee Corners..."

"...We feel that West Chili is an appropriate name for the section in question in as much as it is more or less known as West Chili through increasing usage of that title... Further, there is a North Chili, a South Chili, an East Chili, and a Chili Center, and we feel that the official designation of West Chili would be of considerable assistance to strangers and others in locating residents of this section, as the name West Chili is more or less self-explanatory..."

From the petition initiated by Dallas Davis, the Town Board by an order of September 12, 1934. designated the section to be called West Chili - the name Buckbee Corners was gone from Chili, to be forgotten.

Although the name changed, the section was still popular. Postcards were printed depicting "The Willows", spot along Black Creek in West Chili famous for picnicking. The location received its name from giant and beautiful willow trees growing along the bank of the creek. Today, only one is left. about 200 years old, off Chili Avenue; it is termed as one of the largest willow trees in the Eastern United States.

All these isolated facts about people and places, who lived in Buckbee Corners, or should we say West Chili, have little meaning alone; but when collected together, they form the history of one small section of the Town of Chili - Buckbee Corners.

Buckbee Corners, Chili... a name forgotten; but a name which will continue in the pages of Chili's history.

An early map of Buckbee's Corners, showing the location of some of the early residents.

Above photo taken around 1930 looking north from South Union Street, West Chili. Below, the same view – 1972.

# Ballantyne - A Stretch of Chili Along the River

The Ballantyne Bridge constructed in 1914, since replaced with a modern structure.

Probably no other section of the Town of Chili has had problems like the Ballantyne area. Located along the Genesee River in the southern portion of the town, the early settlers who had moved there were faced with many years of hardship from the floods; frequently waters rose so high entire homes were washed away.

The name Ballantyne comes from John K. Ballantine, a farmer whose land adjoined the first Ballantyne bridge.

Colonel Josiah Fish was one of the first settlers of the area. He was a Revolutionary War Veteran who first came into the Genesee Country in 1793. He then became ill with what was known as the "Genesee Fever," and returned to his original home in Massachusetts. He had removed his family to Vermont, but subsequently in 1795, he and his son Libbeus returned to Chili to commence farming at the mouth of Black Creek.

Colonel Fish hired a team from Mr. Sheffer, broke up a few acres of ground on the open flats and planted. He put up a log hut with bark.

When he returned to Vermont for the rest of his family, Libbeus was left with the Christopher Dugan family in Wheatland.

In April 1796, he returned with his family to settle in the log hut on Black Creek. This home had no floors, windows, or chimney.

Josiah was the first supervisor of the Town of Northamption, the first town west of the Genesee River. He also served as a pathmaster and served on a school committee. The amount expended by the town for the first year of operation of the schools was only $47.68.

There was no bridge across the river between Rochester and Scottsville when a petition was presented to the Monroe County Board of Supervisors on October 14, 1859 by Chili Supervisor O.L. Angevine, signed by two or three hundred persons, and another petition presented by Mr. Reed with signatures of inhabitants on the west side of the river. The petitions called for a bridge across the river on the Town Line of Brighton and Henrietta (location of the present Ballantyne bridge).

The Board of Supervisors passed a resolution specifying that the bridge be built of iron, on the Whipple Plan, of two spans resting on a pier in the center of the river: the bridge to be 215 feet in length and 16 feet in width. The Board voted $5,000 as the county's share of the cost of construction, the money to be raised by a tax levy after the adjoining towns had raised by vote in the spring election or by subscription, the difference between $5,000 and the final cost of the bridge. The resolution was adopted on December 16, 1859.

On May 16, 1873, a resolution was presented to the Board stating that the bridge between the towns of Brighton and Henrietta on the east and Chili on the West side of the river (the first Ballantyne Bridge) had been removed because it was unfit for public use; that needs of the travelling public demanded a bridge, at that point and the Board was asked to investigate the matter. A committee report of November 6, 1873 , recommended building a new bridge, using the old pier, with the county paying $1,500 of the cost and the three towns involved the rest. The bridge was completed December 15, 1874 and the final cost was $6,025.17 of which $4,525. 17 came from the towns.

In May, 1913, a joint committee on Ways and Means and Good Roads recommended that a new Ballantyne Bridge be built. Charles F. Stowell, an Albany bridge expert, met with the committee and was hired to inspect the materials and the

construction of the bridge. On June 3, 1913, the Board of Supervisors approved a contract for $42,435. but extra work (guard rails, paving of Scottsville Road at both ends of the bridge, a concrete culvert of East River Road) increased the final cost to $44,-832.10.

The bridge was not completed until May 1, 1914, because of a late spring and high water hold up of work.

This bridge built in 1914 was torn down in the 1960's and replaced at the time Scottsville Road and Jefferson Road were redone to accomodate increased traffic in the area.

Another early resident of the Ballantyne area was Mr. James Harper, who moved from Garbutt to Chili in 1910. Even before moving to the area, he delivered mail throughout the section. He remembers the road being two feet deep with mud at times after the waters had receeded. The mail was delivered with a horse and carrier buggy in good weather and a horse and cutter in winter. When the river overflowed he could only bring the mail as far as Krenzer's hill from Scottsville Road.

It was Mr. Harper's idea to have the road named changed from Mosquito Point Road to Ballantyne Road.

One year, when flood waters were extremely high, Mr. Harper brought his sheep to his barn by canoe, two at a time. He, at one time, took a boat along the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad tracks to Paul Road. He left the boat and walked to West Avenue where he took a streetcar to get groceries.

According to Mr. Harper, a Martin Huntley had a blacksmith shop near the southwest corner of Ballantyne Road and Scottsville Road. There was a one room schoolhouse near the northwest corner and just west of the Pennsylvania railroad tracks stood a log cabin. All have since been torn down.

Dominating the memories of those who live in the Ballantyne area are the floods. Mrs. Charles Diegel of Alfred Avenue remembers spring of 1936, a flood caused the homeowners in the area to leave their dwellings because of the water. In March, 1942 the homes again had water instead of grass on their front lawns! The Ballantyne School was closed many days because of the flooding conditions of the river.

With the advancement of modern engineering, much of the serious flooding had subsided. High waters of March 31, 1950 which covered nine square miles, were probably the last to cause Monroe County families to leave their homes and belongings in search of dry land.

On that date, from Genesee Valley Park southward for three miles, most of the land was under from one to four feet of water. The flooded area extended about a mile and a half back from the riverbanks.

On that same date, the United States Geological Survey recorded an average flow of 31,200 cubic feet of water per minute over the Court Street dam for the 24 hour period.

On November 28, 1950, when Mt. Morris dam was 75% completed, many up-river communities reported the most serious flood situation in their history. Conditions in the Rochester area, however, were mostly normal. The crest of the flood had dwindled substantially, having spent much of its force on the Genesee flats. The Geological Survey recorded a daily average flow of 15,600 cubic feet per minute over the Court Street dam.

Dedication of the Mt. Morris dam on June 26, 1952 brought state and federal officials to the 216-foot structure which the Corps of Army Engineers began in 1948 and completed at a $600,000 lower cost that the $20,205,200 original estimate.

The residents of the Ballantyne area of Chili have one item in common - their bondedness at time of trouble. They have, together, made themselves heard regarding problems of roads, drainage, sewers, and of course, the floods.

Ballantyne still holds an attraction to those who have grown up there. Many of the residents have purchased new homes or refurbished older ones remaining in the Ballantyne section of the Town of Chili.

In Spring of 1942, scenes like these were common, as the Genesee overflowed causing residents to leave their homes.

# NORTH CHILI - An Area of Contrasts

**The building at the northeast corner of Buffalo Road and Union Street was a tavern in 1850.**

North Chili. Although today the average motorist will barely notice the sign on Buffalo Road, in the 1880's, this area of Chili was a thriving, even boisterous section of the town. Situated around the intersection of Buffalo Road and Union Street the area was originally a social gathering place for travellers and citizens. Liquor and beer flowed freely, gambling was available 24 hours a day. Then a man named B. T. Roberts changed all that, and North Chili went dry; the taverns closed, the hotel was converted to a dormitory. But today, liquor is again available in North Chili - it is no longer a dry town!

The tavern occupied the northeast corner of Buffalo Road and Union Streets; the building still stands today. Constructed about 1837, the structure was well-known. It was a famous stopover on early stage runs, and it served as the social center of the countryside for miles around. Cattlemen rested their herds in the large corral nearby on their way to Rochester markets.

The bar was a favorite spot and gamblers either won or lost all they had in the gambling den which was open 24 hours a day.

An article appearing in the Rochester Journal, date unknown, describes the tavern's interior: "...Hugh fireplaces adorned every room and the wine cellar was kept supplied with the choicest wines for the tourist trade. A massive double tier porch extended the full length of the building facing the Buffalo Road, which served as a band stand for the town band every Saturday night... parties danced all night in the spacious ballroom seeking frequent refreshments during the night at the tavern bar..."

That same news article described North Chili as a flourishing little town possessing the tavern with 13 rooms, two blacksmith shops, a wagon makers' shops, two general stores, a tailor shop, a shoe shop, a harness hop, two building contractors' shops, and a meat market. In the 1840's, the New York Central tracks were laid about a mile away, adding importance as a shipping center for stock and products.

But in 1867, things changed; things changed drastically. A clergyman, the Reverend Benjamin Titus Roberts, having received his master's degree from Cornell University, came to North Chili with his family. His idea was to establish a Christian school where a practical and thorough education could be gained without the hindrance to piety found in most of the fashionable schools of his day.

From the Rochester Journal news article: "...Feeling that the tavern would be a demoralizing influence in the promoting of the school, he (Roberts) purchased the building.

"The school was opened in 1867, and classes were held in the tavern. The ballroom was converted into an assembly for chapel services, the bar room became a part of the dining hall, and the hotel rooms were used as dormitories..."

North Chili had changed. No longer were gamblers winning or losing, stages stopping, or parties held. The town went dry.

In 1877, a farm was purchased to be carried on in connection with Roberts' school. A. M. Chesbrough bequeathed a legacy in his lifetime for the purchase of the farm. Upon his death, the school was to be known as Chesbrough Seminary.

The Seminary building was destroyed by fire September 11, 1890; February 27, 1893, B. T. Roberts died.

The original faculty of the school included Reverend Roberts as principal, Mill Delia Jeffries, the preceptress, Miss Lucy Olen, a teacher, and Jessie Murdock, steward.

In the early years, board was $3 per week and students provided their own firewood and fuel to light their lamps.

Of the 24 students who first graduated from Roberts' col-

lege, one was Richard Hubbard, Jr., the man for whom Hubbard Park and Hubbard Drive are now named in Chili.

Today, liquor is available in North Chili, and the Roberts Wesleyan College is one of the most modern and finest in the nation. 700 students are enrolled from 24 different states, 6 foreign countries, and 29 different denominations. 179 are from Monroe County, and 66 of these are from the Town of Chili.

The campus consists of Cox Hall, Faculty House, Merlin G. Smith Science Building, Carpenters Hall, Merselou Hall, Pearce Memorial Free Methodist Church and Pearce Hall, and Roberts Hall. Roberts Hall is the oldest building on the campus and is used as an administration building. There are apartments and dining facilities in at least six other buildings.

Dr. Lawrence Schoenhals is now President of the Roberts Wesleyan College. He believes that "...the community should review their past not that we always be looking back..." He regards history as he quoted from a Chinese aphorism: "To have roots, but to soar like an eagle; we use our roots in history to give impetus to future development. History is useful to see where Chili came from, and where we are going today..."

Roberts Wesleyan College is an institution Chili can be proud to have in its community. Its high standards and aesthetic appearance are commendable.

The tavern as it is today, now private residences.

Carpenter's Hall, Roberts Wesleyan College.

# Schools and Education in Early Chili

The Chili District No. 4 Cobblestone Schoolhouse, closed in the 1950's, is now an historical museum.

Schools of 1972 seem to be returning to the concept of the one-room schoolhouse as modern teaching techniques now include large, spacious classrooms with children learning at their own pace. But compared to the first log building built in 1806 one mile west of Chili Center and north of Black Creek our schools today are vastly different.

Many one-room schools dotted the early Chili landscape. The Cobblestone Schoolhouse at 2517 Scottsville Road in South Chili is typical of the era, and today is preserved as it was years ago. The building housed elementary grades from 1848 until the post-World War II years when the dawn of centralized school systems began in Chili. In the very early years of settlement, the land on which the cobblestone school stands was owned by the Sheffer family. The late George Sheffer, born in 1878, who lived on Morgan Road, stated that a schoolhouse was erected at the site for their children with a teacher paid by the family. In 1828, the land with the building was deeded to the Trustees of School District #4 of Chili, and to their successors in office. This deed was signed by Peter Sheffer on the 21st of April, 1847; the deed was recorded on October 30, 1847, and in the year 1848, the present cobblestone schoolhouse was built for the district. In 1952, the school was closed and the children sent to schools in the Wheatland-Chili Central District. The above information came from a program at the opening of the school as an historical museum. Tours can be arranged through the Chili Town Offices to see the school, containing books and original items used when the school was in session. The school has a record of the following teachers: Helen Wilkinson in 1897, Mabelle Smith in 1909, Nellie Brown from 1929 to 1930, Georgianna Reist from 1930 to 1933, Georgianna MacKenzie from 1933 to 1934, Marjorie MacPherson from 1934 to 1944, Katherine Murphy from 1944 to 1946, Elizabeth Backus from 1946 to 1947, Kathrine Murphy from 1947 to 1948, and Margaret Hughes from 1948 to the school's closing in 1952. In 1965, Mrs. Hughes was present at the ribbon cutting which opened the school as an historical museum.

Paul Road School at 571 Paul Road is the newest school in Chili. Opened in 1967 by the Gates-Chili Central District, it houses 563 pupils in grade K-6. The present principal of the school is Mr. Arthur Shilen. The property was purchased from Mr. and Mrs. William Jacobs who had owned it from 1926 to 1964. The first crossing guard hired in Chili, Mrs. Luella Shearing, still serves as crossing guard at this school.

A one-room school, Chili District #2 at 550 Paul Road now serves as a family residence. Old schoolhouse #10 on the corner of Reed and Morgan Roads also serves now as a private residence.

Another school of the G-C District is Florence Brasser School, 1000 Coldwater Road. This school was formerly Chili #11 school; the building now houses K - 6 grades with an enrollment of 395.

Kindergarten school at North Chili has 154 pupils. The principal, who also acts as a teacher, is Edna Hartley.

The Chestnut Ridge School, at the corner of Chestnut Ridge Road, and Chili Avenue, is a K - 5 elementary school, and has 682 pupils enrolled. The principal there is Mr. Jack Bates. Both North Chili and Chestnut Ridge School are in the Churchville-Chili Central District.

The Ballantyne Road School has drooped to only two double sessions of kindergarten and five first grades. This school houses 220 pupils and the Supervisor is Mrs. Eleanor Brown. This building is in the Wheatland - Chili School District at the corner of Ballantyne Road and Scottsville Road.

There is a school building now used as a family residence in the hamlet of Clifton. The children from the Clifton area now attend Caledonia-Mumford Schools.

St. Pius X School is the only parochial school in Chili. Sister Mary Ellen Gragan is the Principal and 670 pupils are enrolled in kindergarten through eighth grade. The school is located at 3000 Chili Avenue.

At present, there are no

high school buildings within the Town of Chili. All high school children are transported to Wheatland, Riga, Gates, Caledonia, and parochial high schools.

In recent years, a number of area children have been attending WeMoCo school in Spencerport. This is a vocational school; previous to this, some Chili students attended Edison Technical School in Rochester.

As early as 1812, the state provided funds for schools in Chili. The monies were distributed to the various districts according to population. The towns were to raise an equal amount by taxation. In 1814, a rate bill system was initiated and continued over fifty years.

In the early days, many students did not attend classes beyond elementary grades; those wanting further education went to private academies; after the Civil War, the academies declined and high schools took over.

School boards connected with schools serving Chili receive no pay, and spend long hours establishing policy and arranging budgets, both very important to students and parents in today's society. They operate under requirements set by the Board of Regents and Department of Education under state law. School boards in 1972 have problems such as teacher strikes, vandalism, and drug use, unheard of in the early days. Adult Education evening classes are held in our schools for the continuing education of all citizens.

Mrs. Margaret Hughes (second from left) was the last teacher at the Cobblestone Schoolhouse. Here she cuts ribbon opening school as a museum on September 19, 1965. Mrs. Ruth McFee, former Chili Town Historian who completed much of the work to open the building, stands third from left.

The Chili No. 1 school at Beaver Road and Chili Avenue.

# THE CHILI GRANGE - An Important Group Representing Agricultural Chili.

"...from an organization of thirteen members to nearly three hundred, the members of Chili Grange have had their hopes of the last few years realized by the erection of what is considered to be one of the finest grange halls in Western New York..."

This was the way the Rochester newspapers described the opening of the Chili Grange Hall's new building. The date: October 4, 1926. This building still stands today on Chili-Scottsville Road. The dedication of this new hall in 1926 was attended by nearly four hundred grangers from Chili, Gates, Irondequoit, and other surrounding county towns. In charge of those ceremonies were Grange Master S. L. Strivings of Castile, who delivered the dedication address, plus other local grange officials.

The Grange Hall is a two-story frame and concrete block structure used for meetings, dining, etc.

Chili Grange #393 was organized March 22nd,1876 at #3 schoolhouse across from the present Grange Hall at the corner of Stryker and Chili-Scottsville Roads.

On April 29th, 1876, the following officers were elected: Master George S. Root, Secretary P. G. Striker, outside doorkeeper Henry Horton, assistant steward Herbert Root, steward John Striker, lady assistant steward Sarah Striker. Ceres Mrs. Frank Miller and Pomona Emilia Horton, lecturer James Squires, treasurer Joseph Stottle, inside doorkeeper Homer Askin, overseer Joseph Stottle, chaplains Mr. Collins and Flora Welthia Groves.

The first year, 13 members met in school #3. In 1877, John Stryker and Joseph Stottle built a hall on the present site facing Stryker Road. This hall was rented to the Grange.

The winter of 1876 was an old fashioned one and the month of March, according to the recollections of the oldest citizens, was one of the roughest and coldest experienced in this section of the country. The night of the first meeting was cold and stormy, and many of the highways were impassable. Many of the people had travelled for miles, some of them on foot, through the fields and over the snowcovered highways. They did not realize at the time that they were forming the nucleus of what in future years was destined to be one of the largest granges in Western New York.

Timely problems were discussed at early grange meetings, such as patent rights, recipes for killing burdocks, how to keep winter meat from spoiling in the summer, creamery butter versus dash churn butter, and on and on.

The guiding principle of the grange was that a farmer alone can protest, but it will do no good; but by working together the voice of many will be strong and will be heard.

In 1879, the Grangers appointed a business agent and were able to buy articles at a discount, through the year. These included binding twine, coal, groceries, sewing articles, wagons, buggies, and machinery.

Grange members looked forward to each Wednesday's meeting. All kinds of socials were held: rag socials, poor man's socials, and necktie socials. Some lunches were maple syrup and biscuits, oyster stew, cake, and popcorn. Watermelon was eaten before a meeting began as it was cooled from a well.

The first strawberry Social was held June 28th, 1883. Sister Cronise donated the ice cream and one brother donated 10 quarts of strawberries. For several years, peach socials were held in autumn.

On April 22nd, 1897, the hall was purchased from the Stottle Estate and that same year the grange was incorporated.

By 1922, the membership reached 400. In 1924, the old grange hall weakened under the crowd there to watch a minstrel show. All were evacuated safely.

Because of that incident, in 1925, John Wells and his crew started to build the present Chili Grange. This building was dedicated in 1926, the subject of an extensive Rochester news article.

In 1945, the old sheds were sold and removed and trees and shrubs planted in honor of the 40 members who were in the armed forces during World War II.

The Chili Grange presently has 176 members, with a drive on for new members. It is hoped new blood will promote more interest in present day problems. Although non-profit, the organization pays school, county, and town taxes. The members meet in homes in winter. With the scarcity of meetings and recreational facilities, it does seem more uses could be found for this symbol of history, usefullness, and fun in what is the geographical center of Chili.

To quote again from the 1926 news article: "...from the mystical number thirteen the membership has increased from year to year until it is now one of the largest granges in this part of the state. If the superstitious people of half a century ago who perhaps predecided that no good could come to an organization that started with thirteen members, were present at the dedication of the new hall, they might realize the truth in the old saying that 'a prophet is not without honor save in his own country'."

# Over A Century of Farming by the Liebeck Family

Aerial view of the Liebeck farm on Davis Road, Chili.

The Liebeck family, of 1489 Davis Road, has been engaged in agriculture for more than a century in Chili. Mr. and Mrs. Leo Liebeck and son Lee still operate the farm on Davis Road. Leo's grandfather, Engelbert, came from Baden Germany and settled in the State of Michigan. Displeased with that state, he and his family returned East to settle in Chili on the Davis Road in 1868.

In 1902, Leo Liebeck was born in the house in which he is still living. His parents were Pius and Julia Liebeck.

When the family first came to the farm, there were 14 acres of woods on the 100 acre tract. Liebeck cleared 12 acres of this big timber and raised sheep on this land. The sheep would chew off new shoots of the trees and brush to keep the area relatively clean.

The kitchen that originally was on their present house was a building that stood opposite 1520 Davis Road. This was later removed and a new kitchen added on. All beams and joists in the present house are hewn and have bark on the lower side.

The farm land was used for general farming of wheat, oats, barley, beans, and corn. There were eleven acres of apple orchard. Leo can still recall the days when he would travel by horse and buggy down the then dirt Davis, Paul, and Chili Roads.

Mr. Liebeck started the dairy farming business about 1928. He sold milk to his brother Bert for 3 years, to Wegman's Dairy for 26 years, and to Decker's Dairy for about 8 years. The milk is currently sold to the Genesee Valley Co-operative Dairy in bulk.

A portion of the original farm, ten acres, was taken by the State of New York during the building of the Western Expressway. Leo purchased 58 acres in the 1940's to add to the present farm. The family rents about 100 acres making a total operation of 248 acres.

# Two Pioneer Women of Chili

## One Black ...

**Virginia Jane Johnson attended Chesbrough Seminary (now Roberts Wesleyan College) in 1870.**

## One White ...

**Helen Eveline Wilkinson in 1893 became the first woman to take regular courses at the University of Rochester.**

In the annals of Chili's vast and rich history, two ladies are remembered by many as a credit to the town. One was black, a former slave, the other the first woman to attend regular classes at the University of Rochester. Both lived in Chili for most of their lives.

For over 6 decades, Virginia Jane Johnson, known best as Aunt Jennie, resided in North Chili. Born in Amherstberg, Ontario in 1853, she was the daughter of two runaway slaves who had escaped to the United States via the underground railroad. At the age of 7, Aunt Jennie was left parentless, and was moved from home to home throughout the northeastern states.

Through the influence of a Miss Emma Sellew, who later became the wife of B. T. Roberts, founder of Roberts Wesleyan College, Jennie was moved to North Chili. At the age of 17, with no prior education, Jennie was tutored and attended Chesbrough Seminary (now Roberts College). Following this formal education, Jennie became employed by Mr. and Mrs. Anson H. Cady, who owned the general store in North Chili. At this home, Jennie gained wide renown as an excellent cook.

Following the death of the Cadys, she purchased a home on the Buffalo Road, but because of illness, could not continue its upkeep, and then lived with Mrs. Catherine McFee, a lady whom Jennie had cared for when she was a child.

Jennie was extremely active in church and religious services. She joined the Free Methodist Church, organized in the year 1861, and was a life member. She was one of the few persons from this area who attended the first camp meeting of the denomination in Hubbard's Woods.

The Rochester Democrat & Chronicle, in a March, 1931 issue, described Jennie as follows: "...Since Jennie's arrival in North Chili, she has witnessed many changes in the community, and now only a few persons who lived there when she first came, are alive. She is still active, when weather permits, in church and women's missionary society affairs, and goes about her daily work with the genial smile that has won her countless friends..."

Upon her death on September 23, 1936, at the age of 84, it was learned she had left most of her life savings to the Free Methodist Church, an amount of $2,000.

Another famous, yet now forgotten lady of Chili was Helen Eveline Wilkinson, the first woman to take regular courses at the University of Rochester, thus giving the college the "co-ed" title.

Although attending the University, her ambition to attain a degree was never fulfilled; her studies were halted because of illness and she died before finishing school.

Helen had defied tradition, convention, and stubborn trustees and helped to open the gate of learning to the thousands of women who followed. Among 70 entering freshmen at the chapel lecture on September 21, 1893, she was the sole woman.

A newspaper account of the day read in part: "...The appearance of the 'co-ed' in the hallway shortly before chapel was called was the signal for an outburst of enthusiasm given vent in the old varsity yell reworded to suit the occasion -

Co-edgie! Co-edgie! Co-edgie! Who up! Parabalou! Rochester!

"Not in the least abashed, the young lady collegian made her way through the noisy crowd and, tripping lightly up the stairs, took her seat well toward the front of the chapel.

Miss Wilkinson was crowded in by boys on every side, but unembarrassed, she listened intently to the reading of the morning session with no attention to her surroundings.

Two days before, the Rochester Post Express gave this account of Helen's registration:

"...Ladies were admitted to the English literature lectures of Professor Gilmore, and Miss Dransfield of this city permitted to take a special course in the institution a year ago. This morning, another and more important step was taken in the interest of co-education. Miss Helen. E. Wilkinson, accompanied by Professor Edict, who had prepared her for college, walked into Registrar Fairchild's room and asked to be registered for the classical course. Professor Fairchild smiled and took her name. Considering the controversy over co-education at that time, this was major achievement..."

Miss Wilkinson had acted on the counsel of Susan B. Anthony, woman sufferage leader. Upon graduation from School 5, Helen was urged by Miss Anthony to seek her education at the university. This she did, by courage, matched only by her modesty.

Helen continued her studies at the university for two years at which time illness forced her to withdraw. For a while she taught at the Chili School District #4 (the Chili Cobblestone Schoolhouse) until pneumonia, brought on by grippe, resulted in death on February 9, 1897 - the year she would have been graduated. She was only 26.

Newspapers cited her modesty and bravery and the much favorable comment and praise in the city during her pioneering efforts at the U. of R.

"Today, the university has all but forgotten Helen Eveline Wilkinson," the Rochester Times-Union said in 1953; "her portrait hangs in the Susan B. Anthony house and a few cherished possessions are held by a brother, Fred, of Morton, New York.

In terms of the university's more than 100 years, Miss Wilkinson's career was only a tiny chapter. But in the battle for co - education, it was a turning point..."

Aunt Jennie Johnson and Helen Wilkinson, two ladies of Chili, are now all but forgotten.

# Chili's First Supervisor, JUDGE JOSEPH SIBLEY

Chili's first Supervisor named at the first town meeting was Joseph Sibley. We now offer a brief summary of this man's life:

Judge Joseph B. Sibley, the "Father of Chili," settled in the valley of the Genesee in 1804. He was originally from Rensselaer County. When arriving in this area, he settled in the Town of Rush at the age of 20, with no capital. He had only good health, courage, and an indomitable spirit. It has been written that Judge Sibley had "...the moral heroism to look difficulty and danger in the face, boldly and undismayed...and where comparatively strong minds would have fallen in despair and firm constitutions would have gone down under repeated shocks of adversity, he has been like the old oak that has planted its roots deep in the clefts of the rock..."

In 1807, he was married to Clarissa Church, the daughter of Richard Church of Riga. This was the first marriage performed in Riga.

He opened a milling business on Black Creek which he operated in the 1830's. Records indicate he sold this to David Cope on April 10, 1837.

When the War of 1812 began, Sibley volunteered to serve under Colonel Swift.

His career included holding the positions of both Riga and Chili Supervisor, a member of the State Legislature, a canal superintendent for five years, a collector of the Port of Genesee under Polk, and a Monroe County Judge. A number of times he was a candidate for Congress from the Democratic Party. He has the honor of being a First Judge of the County of Monroe. Although he was not a member of the bar, he held the office, one of the times a layman has held such a responsible position.

Judge Sibley was said to have a remarkable memory, excellent judgment, and a willingness to help his neighbors and fellow citizens.

In his writings, Sibley tells of pioneers dying from what people spoke of as the "Genesee Fever." This was caused by the flooding of timber lands by mill dams. When the waters receeded, the fever subsided.

He also writes of a wolf hunt in 1815:

"...the inhabitants of the whole region turned out, and surrounded all the swamps in Gates, Chili, Wheatland, and Caledonia; sounded horns, fired guns, hallowed, shouted, and raised a din of discordant sounds..."

Many deer, fox, and bear were killed, and after that hunt, few wolves were seen in this region.

Judge Sibley died in Rush, New York in 1862.

Much has been written about Chili's first supervisor, a truly remarkable pioneer of Monroe County.

# The Rochester-Monroe County Airport: A Brief History

The Rochester Municipal Airport, August 29, 1934.

The Rochester-Monroe County Airport is located only 12 minutes away from downtown Rochester. This great advantage of having an airport so close is perhaps overshadowed by the noise and pollution generated from the aircraft. Since the airport is located in the Town of Chili, the residents who live around the field must put up with the noise.

However, when land for the airport was first acquired, the Chili site was considered ideal because it was relatively a good distance away from the major populated areas. But as the airport grew, and the people moved in, some problems arose especially the noise.

In Chili's pioneer days, a mill was located on the land which now boasts of a jet runway. The mill, built by Leonard Weidner, was constructed somewhere around 1793 Records point out that the mill was taken over by the Paul Brothers, then Nathan Dean, then Alex McVean.

In the 20th century, the area around the airport near Brooks Avenue was mostly a section made up of citizens of Italian descent. The homes were small but rememberances of some Chili residents indicate the dwellings were kept extremely clean.

Following the Wright Brothers' flight, the age of aviation proceeded quickly. John Frisbee, in 1911, made the first successful flight over the Rochester area. In 1918, the Aviation Committee of the Rochester Chamber of Commerce was formed.

An aerial view of the old Rochester Municipal Airport.

Chili entered the picture on December 9, 1919. On that date the Rochester Common Council acquired land off Scottsville Road in Chili for the establishment of an aircraft base. 110 acres were involved in that initial acquisition, with a 66-foot roadway from the parcel to Scottsville Road. This aircraft base was named Britton Field - the first airport in Monroe County.

The deed to the land was taken in 1921 for $71,127.61 from W.N.Britton, who had owned the property.

From the time the airport was established, through the early 1920's, little progress was seen in Rochester in the field of aviation. Only amateurs and a few of the curious ventured out to Britton Field. Gradually, though, the age of flying did come.

In 1924, mail was picked up at two downtown locations from boxes marked "air mail." The letters were taken to Britton Field and flown out of Rochester for the first time. The first experimental mail flight was destined to Cleveland, Ohio from Rochester.

Charles Lindberg made his historic trans- Atlantic solo flight in May, 1927, He later

flew to Rochester in his plane, the "Spirit of St. Louis," to bring aviation to an even greater local level.

In the late 1920's, Hanger No. 1 was completed at a cost of $20,548. The building was 80 feet by 100 feet, and at the time, was termed "...adequate for airport needs for a long time."

The first passenger flight from Rochester to New York City left Britton Field in 1927, and at that time, the City of Rochester issued certain rules that stipulated no plane, airship, or balloon could be operated over the skies of Rochester without a permit from the city. It also stipulated all pilots must have at least 50 hours of solo flying time.

The name Britton Field was changed to Rochester Municipal Airport in 1928. On June 1, 1928, $119,000 was spent for airport improvements to include one 1000 foot runway. one 1500 foot runway, the lighting of the hangar, and a revolving beacon.

Also in 1928, Hangar No.2 was constructed.

During the 1930's the airport was large enough to handle the volume of mail, packages. and passengers. And because people were not living in the area immediately surrounding the airport (as they do today) there were relatively few complaints of noise, etc.

The County of Monroe took over operation of the airport on January 1, 1948. The county contracted to improve the airport to bring it up to Class 4, Express Airport requirements. Land was acquired to bring the total acreage of the airfield to 762, then more land was acquired to bring the total to 827 acres.

An instrument landing runway, an administration building and an overall maintainance program was initiated.

Because of the growth of the area, the county realized a new terminal was needed, and on June 21, 1953, the airport was "re-dedicated" upon the completion of the new Brooks Avenue terminal.

As the Town of Chili grew, so did the airport. Runways were lengthened, the terminal was expanded several times, and homeowners began to build near the airport. The homeowners apparently knew of the airport and its conditions of noise, but built anyway.

In 1962, Chili Supervisor George K. Lusk requested Chili Town Attorney Ralph Wickins to draw up petitions to be circulated around the town to protest airport expansion. Lusk also asked the Town of Gates to do the same.

The airport expanded anyway, and the first commercial liner, an American Airlines 727 landed here in January, 1965.

Now, the people living in Chili and Gates around the airport must be well accustomed to the planes overhead. Today, noise is not the big problem. Today, ecologists are interested in trying to keep pollutants from the planes engines from clogging up the air.

There are many interested sidelights of events concerning the airport, including passengers spending the night because of bad weather, etc.

On September 1, 1941, a storm halted British RAF bombers over western New York. The storm was so bad that these planes had to land in Rochester. They touched down at 6 p.m. on a flight from a California factory bound for England.

Even in 1954, Chili was a land filled with much wildlife. And the airport didn't matter to some animals. On July 16th of that year 2 deer wandered onto the runway, just at the time American Airlines flight 762 was landing from Buffalo at 9:30 a.m. The pilot was notified the runway was temporarily blocked. While another plane taxied down the runway to scare off the deer, the in-bound plane had to circle the runway before landing!

Today, there is talk of building a jetport near Batavia, but with the amount of money and land invested in our present airport, it seems Chili will have an airfield in the town for a long long time to come.

One of the first airshows held in Rochester.

# Cobblestone Landmarks of Chili

**Exterior of the Stuart home, on Stuart Road, off Chili Avenue.**

Thousands of years ago, a great glacier crept down from the north and covered most of New York State. As it moved along, it picked up loose rocks which it slowly ground down and roughly smoothed. When the glacier retreated, it left those same rocks strewn over the land.

At the time the settlers were clearing the land, many masons had finished work on the Erie Canal and were looking for more jobs. From 1825 to 1860, the era between the building of the Erie Canal and the Civil War, these masons constructed the cobblestone buildings, many still standing today.

On Stuart Road in West Chili, a 13-room cobble stone mansion was constructed by Joseph Sibley in the 1830's. William Emmens, the mason employed by Sibley, used glacial stones gathered from the farm for construction.

The two - story gable end faces north toward Black Creek and the mill pond. The oval gable window and entranceway are both done in the Post Colonial or Federal style. In 1875, the farm was purchased by Mr. Eli Stuart. Mr. and Mrs. Raymond Stuart, the present owners, have made only minor changes to add central heating and plumbing. Seven original fireplaces including a basement kitchen fireplace and a brick beehive-back oven have been preserved. First floor rooms have carved moldings in the Greek revival style and the entrance hall has a hand operated door bell. Many original window panes, door latches and doors of the 1830's are still to be seen in the interior of the home.

The Krenzer cobblestone at 745 Ballantyne Road was purchased in 1866 from David Smith. Mr. and Mrs. Louis Krenzer, one of the five generations of Krenzers to own the farm, are present occupants. Cobblestones in this house are flat and have an even appearance not usually associated with cobblestone walls. Quoins are rough limestone and windows have split gray limestone and wood sills.

The Sickles family were early pioneers in Monroe County. Arthur Sickles, who lived in the house at 860 Ballantyne Road, was a Supervisor of Chili and highway commissioner. Arthur married Lydia Franklin, who was born on the farm. His son, Lee, was a town assessor. The home, built in 1845, is now owned by Mr. and Mrs. Royal Marshal.

The Chili Cobblestone Schoolhouse Museum, at 2517 Scottsville Road, was built in 1848. It is a typical nineteenth century one-room schoolhouse. Closed in 1952, it subsequently was deeded to the town. It remained empty until 1965 when it was rededicated as the Chili Historical Museum. Visitors may now see how children of yesterday were taught and examine the facilities which were then available. The recitation bench is over 100 years old and the text books and double benches add to the growing collection of materials that are enjoyed by the visitors.

The Sheffer family built the house presently owned and occupied by Mr. and Mrs. Frederick Bean of 95 Sheffer Road. In 1840 this two-story cobblestone home, with an off-center entrance, was the home of the Sheffers, who resided here until 1940. The entrance steps are of Ohio sandstone and inside the house retains a cooking fireplace and beehive oven. The floors are of old hemlock wood. The barn across the road is a late-nineteenth century building constructed by John Wells of Scottsville.

Samuel Pope built the cobblestone home at 1000 Chili-Scottsville Road, now owned by Mr. and Mrs. Abraham Fisher. The home is one of the earliest cobblestones in Chili built about 1820. The entrance is recognized as an exceptional post colonial or Federal style. The eliptical wooden fan over the

**Continued on next page.**

**COBBLESTONES Continued from preceeding page.**

door was used rather than a glass fanlight. The cobblestones used were collected from the fields and are of various shapes and colors. The corners of the window sills and lintels are of cut gray limestone. The Fishers have lived on the 206 acre farm since 1948.

The cobblestone house at 1001 Chili-Scottsville Road has been redisigned to create two apartments. It is a two-story house with a center entrance, built in the 1830's by Daniel Franklin. It has been owned by Fred Krenzer since 1945.

# Frogleg George - A Colorful Character in Chili

**The only known photograph of John Preissecker (Frogleg George) taken around 1910 on Front Street, Rochester, by a Democrat and Chronicle photographer.**

He swallowed live frogs while crowds on the street cheered! He carried live frogs and snakes in his pickets and would scare children along his route! He said he had herbs to cure arthritis and other afflictions.

"He" was Frogleg George, and his territory was the G-C area in the early 1900's. With his trained mule, Jenny, Frogleg George would roam the sparsely populated area in search mainly of frogs, then sell the frogs to restaurants and hotels in Rochester. He was Rochester's leading supplier of froglegs in the 1900's.

His real name was John S. Preissecker, and he resided within the City of Rochester most of his life; after his wife passed away, he moved to live with the Walsh family, at 1782 Chili-Gates Town Line Road, now Westside Drive.

Frogleg frequently got out into the Chili area; Leo Liebeck of Davis Road gave him rides on his motorcycle. One hot summer evening, Leo and neighbor went swimming in a favorite swimming hole in Black Creek. Someone started throwing rocks into the creek! It was then Leo realized they had disturbed Frogleg George sleeping in the woods.

Other Chili residents who remember Frogleg George are Frank Zuber, Mrs. Graham of the Golden Road area, the Hertz girls of Chili Mills, and Mr. and Mrs. Clarence Heeg of Westside Dr.

"The invention of the devil" was the way George described the auto, and he was twice struck by a car. One October night in 1929, his unlighted wagon was struck from the rear on Buffalo Road, in Gates. George went to the hospital for treatment of a fractured arm, but the mule escaped unharmed. In 1931, on Chili Road, George's mule was killed as a result of another auto accident.

After the passing of his wife, George moved out of the City into the G-C area. On March 29, 1936, his obituary appeared in a Rochester newspaper; he left no known relatives.

From Chili-Gates Town Line Road, to Froghollow Road, to Chili Road, to Rochester, Frogleg George was known to many in this area of Monroe County. The complete text of an extensive article about Frogleg George has been published in the March 15, 1972 edition of the G-C NEWS.

# A Wealth of History at the Chili Mills

There's a wealth of area history available right in the Town of Chili at Chili Mills. Located about 1 mile west of Union Street on Route 33 A, the Chili Mills have been an important area since its establishment in the 1800's.

The property was purchased by the William Wilcox family in 1965, and since that time, the entire family has been restoring the buildings and renovating them to the look of the period. Their interests and collections add to the site. The collections include local histories, printed material, Early American pressed glass water pitchers and lamps, marbles, penny-banks, clocks, carpenter tools, bells, house brasses, and Carriages. The Wilcox family's diverse interests and abilities from research to building repairs have made reclamation of this historic property possible.

Since purchasing the property July 2, 1965, the Wilcox family has been preserving and restoring the mill site. They were able to save and renovate the older house and move into it by September of 1969.

Big Black Creek, frozen in winter, passes the mill site.

The original mill site consisted of several hundred acres owned by Judge Joseph Sibley, a prominent pioneer of Monroe County. Records indicate he operated a milling business on Big Black Creek. This business was sold to David Cope on April 10, 1837.

In 1858, the grist mill con-

tained 3 runs of stones with abundant water. There were 30 acres of land, of which, however, 25 were covered by the waters of the mill pond.

In 1866, the flouring mill burned in Chili; the mill had recently been purchased by William H. Rogers, and the blaze was seen plainly in Rochester about 10 miles away.

Chrisopher Feely purchased the mill in 1875. He was born in Henrietta, and died in Chili in 1892. His son, Samuel, also ran the mills. The Chili Mills were sold to the Ritzenthaler brothers in 1895. From that date until 1901 they ran the business until the mill burned.

Alexander and Bertha Hertz took ownership of Chili Mills in 1901. A daughter, Gertrude, operated the mill after her father's death in 1916. The National Miller Magazine published an article telling of her being the only woman in America to operate and manage a grist mill. An article was also published in the Rochester Herald newspaper in 1918 about Miss Hertz.

(The Wilcox family has the September 11, 1918 edition of that newspaper with the article concerning Gertrude Hertz.)

The house in which the Wilcox family now resides was built in the 1820's. It had as previous residents Judge Joseph Sibley, and the Samuel Feely family, and is constructed in Greek Revival architecture.

A second house on the site is presently being restored. The kitchen has been renovated to the look of the 1800's, and the house is built in the northern colonial style.

The batten board-end barn, built before 1835, is presently being used as a carriage museum.

The ice house on the mill site, built about 1875, is insulated with sawdust. Ice was cut on the mill pond and lasted as late as the month of August.

The presently-standing mill was built in 1901 by Alexander Hertz. Inside the mill, the equipment used by Gertrude Hertz is on display, as well as carpenter tools, and a wide variety of items used in the milling trade.

The Chili Mills site provides visitors with a realistic picture of what life was like in the pioneer days of Chili. The Wilcox family has collected a wealth of information rich in the history of our area.

Many visitors have toured the mill site, some from foreign lands.

View of the Stuart Road Bridge from Chili Mills.

***Those who live in history only seemed to walk the earth again.***

***- Longfellow***

# Fire Protection in the Town of Chili

Chili's First Engine - A Model T, photo taken around 1933.

As early as April 10, 1838, fires have been recorded within the boundaries of Chili. On that date, the Rochester Republican newspaper reported : "...the house of Major Lacy was destroyed by fire yesterday morning. Our informant states that very little of the furniture was saved..."

Since that time, the residents of Chili realized the need for an effective means of combating fires. In the 1800's, upon receiving word of a fire, work in the fields would stop, and all able - bodied men and boys would rush to the scene and form a "bucket brigade" to quell the flames.

It was not until the 1930's however, that organized companies of men were formed for fire protection. Within the Town of Chili, there are three volunteer fire departments to serve in time of emergency - the Chili Fire Department, the Riverdale Fire Department, and the Clifton Fire Department.

The Chili Volunteer Fire Department was organized on October 6, 1931, with 22 active members. Seth Weidner is listed as the first president, Oscar Kuebler as the first vice-president, and John Steeves, Sr. as the first fire chief. Chili's first fire house was located on a parcel of land in Chili Center on which today stands the present Chili Firehouse Company #1. Inside was one engine, a Model T.

Realizing the need for better representation around the Town of Chili, two other firehouses were constructed in 1941 - one in North Chili, the other on Chili Avenue. at Chestnut Drive.

In 1972, the Chili Fire Department has two ambulances, 1 snorkel, 4 pumpers, and 143 active firemen to serve the community. President is John Steeves, Jr., vice president is Lou Gracey, secretary is Don Buck, Paul May now serves as financial secretary, John Steeves, Sr. is treasurer, and Steve Trenton serves as corresponding secretary. Presently , Chili has four battalion chiefs, Roy Piper - Company 1, Will Ellis - Company 2, Ray Bubel - Company 3, and George Miles - Rescue.

At its annual banquet in February, 1970, the Chili Fire Department Ladies Auxiliary proudly celebrated its 25th year of working with, standing by, and marching behind their husband-and-brother firemen. This organization, which began in 1944, with 26 charter members, still has 11 of those original members. Those 11 ladies are Elva Betz, Anna Butcher, Marjorie Ess, Dorothy Fox, Ethel Hubbard, Helen Marshall, Mary McFee, Ruth McFee, Ruth Meister, Loraine Pancoast, and Esther White.

Auxiliary members are wives, mothers, daughters or sisters of active volunteer firemen of the Chili Fire Department, whose first concern is to be of help to the firemen. This help includes serving coffee and food at the actual scene of Code 5 (working) fires, assisting with Carnival duties, giving clerical help with the fund drives, and probably most important of all, just being there when the tired fireman comes home.

Since the completion of the attractive new Company #1 firehouse, the auxiliary ladies cater wedding receptions, Communion breakfasts, bowling banquets, and other types of parties, to raise money for their many worthwhile projects.

As specified in their Constitution, the auxiliary is to provide "...aid and assistance to those residents of Chili who may be in need thereof, especially those who have suffered loss, or injury, through fire." This they have done and continue to do.

The Auxiliary has been active in community affairs throughout the years. During the 1950's, the old Company #1 fire house was the scene of monthly square dances, enjoyed by citizens of all ages. It is hoped that this tradition can be re-created, at least partially, in the future. For most of the 27 years, this group has sponsored the Town of Chili Harvest Queen contest, thus making possible one of the more important annual community events.

A very important part of the Chili Ladies Auxiliary is its Drill Team, which through the

years has received more than its share of parade prizes.The girls' marching is as sharp as their uniforms, and they provide a colorful addition to the Chili contingent throughout the parade season.

The 1972 officers of the ladies auxiliary are: Mrs. Jasper Miner, president; Mrs. Gordon Mosher, recording secretary; Mrs. John Sibbald, corresponding secretary; Mrs. Gerold Van Delver, treasurer; and Directors Mrs. William Goeltz, Mrs. Robert Kingsley, and Mrs. George Lusk.

The Town of Chili should be proud of this group of women dedicated to helping others and serving the town with their husbands, brothers or sons, who are firemen.

In 1932, the men from the Chili Fire Department, Company #4 broke away from the Chili group to form their own fire department - the Clifton Volunteer Fire Department. Incorporated in 1934, and chartered in 1935, the Clifton group also has an active fire department and a ladies auxiliary, formed in 1946.

Men who were the first active firemen in Clifton include Wallace Coyle, Sam Frazier, Harry Newman, Charles Emens, Lloyd Burdett, Fred Wickins, Sherman Fisher, John Wickins, George Potter, William Heffer, James Hensby, George Coyle, William Horton, and Emery Burdett. The first carnival in Clifton raised $180.95. The carnival is still an annual event there.

Today, the Clifton Fire Department has four pieces of apparatus to provide fire protection to that area of Chili.

The third fire organization within Chili is the Riverdale Fire-Police, Inc. This group was incorporated on July 8, 1932. On that date, the first meeting was held with 27 men attending. The first fire chief was Carl Guelzow, who served in that capacity for 6 years. The first vehicle was a model T Ford with two 100 gallon tanks of water as a supply.

The Ladies Auxiliary was formed on April 17, 1941, with Buelah Hamell as the first chairman; today, Mrs. Hamell is still a member as is her husband, Ellwood Hamell, a member of the Riverdale Board of Fire Commissioners.

Riverdale was one of the first fire companies to own and use a boat in the fire service. This boat was used in the early 1930's and is still in use today by the department.

The Riverdale group was the first fire company in Monroe County to accept women as active firefighters. Five of the eight original women are still on the active rolls. These girls perform in the same capacity as the men.

Operating today with 38 active members, Riverdale utilizes 1956 and 1946 pumpers, a 1969 Emergency truck, and a 1929 12-foot boat. The present president is Alfred D'Olivo; the present chief is Walton Rhoda; Ellwood Hamell is the present chairman of the Board of Fire Commissioners.

Originally, in 1932, Riverdale extended to the canal on Scottsville Road. In 1938, that portion of Scottsville Road to Ballantyne Road was annexed by the Gates Fire District. Today, the Riverdale district is bounded on the north by the Genesee Junction and Paul Rd. on the east by the Genesee River, on the south by Morgan Road, and on the west by the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad.

Riverdale, one of the smallest fire departments in Monroe County, with the same dedication the original members exhibited in 1932, together with the Chili Fire Department and the Clifton Fire Department, perform a service for their community, not for personal gain, but for love and respect of their fellow citizens and neighbors.

A group photo of Chili's fire equipment, around the 1940's.

***History is a pageant, not a philosophy.***

***- Birrell***

# Chili's Religious Heritage

During the celebration of Chili's Sesquicentennial, it is fitting that the religious heritage of the town be recognized. Chili has numerous denominations represented in its population, and many church structures to serve the community.

In the hamlet of Clifton, in 1852, the Clifton Baptist Church was organized as a mission branch of the Belcoda Baptist Church. First to serve as pastor was the Reverend A.K. Stimson. The building was remodeled in 1903; an educational wing has been added, and today, the church has been improved with outdoor aluminum siding. The church serves approximately 35 families in the Clifton area; it is located within the hamlet of Clifton on Weatland Center Road.

**********

*First Presbyterian*

One of the oldest churches in Chili, the First Presbyterian Church on Chili Avenue at Stottle Road, was formed in June, 1816. This is the first entry in the remarkably well-preserved records of the church; the words were carefully scribed in the crude ink of the day (being a mixture of vinegar and iron filings) and have now faded to rust, but remain clear enough to read: "... the following persons, of varying Protestant creeds, presented themselves for the purpose of being formed into a church - Belknap, Hemingway, Merlin, Potter, Dewey, Clark, Gridley, Baldwin, Deming, Darwin, Watmore, Bacon, Hartman, and Andrews..."

Reverend Wallis, a Missionary from the Genesee Society, preached the first sermon before the founding congregation assembled that Sabbath morning. He chose for his text, the words Zachariah 6:12- ".....thus speaketh the Lord of hosts, saying, Behold the man whose name is the Branch, and he shall grow up out of his place and he shall build the temple of the Lord." So the First Presbyterian Society of Chili was born, distinguished today as one of the oldest church organizations in Monroe County. A Mr. Sheldon offered to provide the site opposite his house and furnish a large part of the material for the building which was erected in 1818.

The builder selected, in 1832, for the present church was Jacob Hovey. He and others worked throughout the summer and completed the building by late fall. In 1923, an electric service line was run from Chili Center to the church at a cost of $1,200. In 1954, a bulldozer broke ground for the construction of an addition on the rear of the church. This would house Sunday School rooms, a recreational hall, and a dining hall. The new wing was dedicated June 26, 1955.

**********

*St. Christopher's*

In contrast to the First Presbyterian Church, probably the newest, the youngest church in Chili today is St. Christopher's Roman Catholic Church on Union Street. Founded in June, 1968, Bishop Fulton J. Scheen appointed the Reverend Elmer J. McDonald as pastor. The church building was completed in 1971 with the first mass said Sunday, January 30, 1971. Serving over 700 families in the Churchville and Chili areas, the parish offers religious education for all grade levels.

**********

*First Free Methodist*

The First Free Methodist Society of North Chili, New York was organized in 1861. Since the founding of Roberts Wesleyan College in 1866, the church has served both community and school.

Until 1937, the worship facility was but a small building seating 200 persons. A step was taken when the church was enlarged to twice its size. In 1945, the church was destroyed by fire. For seven years, services were conducted in Cox Hall Auditorium at Roberts Wesleyan College.

St. Feehan's Church, Golden Rd. at Chestnut Ridge Rd. - 1940, now St. Pius the Tenth, at Chili Avenue and Chestnut Ridge Rd.

In the fall of 1950, the present building was begun and in June, 1951, Pearce Memorial Church and Pearce Hall were dedicated. The church is named in honor of Bishop William Pearce, who at one time served as a District Superintendant and lived in the community. The leadership and dedication of the Pastor, Reverend W.J. Parmerter, who now resides in North Chili, guided and moved the building effort to completion.

Reverend Elwyn E. Cutler came to pastor the church in 1961. Membership continued to increase and out reach in the community began to grow. Plans were again laid for expansion. In 1966, the present sanctuary and fellowship hall addition were dedicated.

In 1966, the former sanctuary, built in 1951, was named Parmerter Chapel, for the many sacrificial hours dedicated by Rev. W.J. Parmerter.

Church membership continues to grow and now stands at 711, as compared to 581 in 1966. Three full-time pastors are now employed - Rev. Elwyn E. Cutler is the Senior Pastor-Rev. Glenn D. Hughes, Associate

Pastor; and Rev. Robert W. Wolcott, Associate in Youth and Collegiate Ministries.

**********

*St. Feehan's-St. Pius Tenth*

Among the Irish families that settled in the rolling land of Chili in the 1830's was one headed by Patrick Golden, the son of Feehan Golden. He set up his log cabin between Sand Ridge (now Chestnut Ridge Road) and the New York Central Railroad on what is now Golden Road. His large family emigrated directly from Ireland to Chili.

Since the nearest Catholic church was St. Patrick's in Rochester, these families made the trek each Sunday with teams and wagons to attend Mass. But when more and more families began to make the same journey, they felt that their ride would be obviated if a priest would come from the city to celebrate Mass for them in Chili. Accordingly the pastor of St. Patrick's received the necessary permission from Bishop Timon of Buffalo (for Rochester was not yet a diocese) and a priest began coming to Chili to offer the Mass. Mass was held in the homes of Pat Golden and John Cummings.

On November 5, 1854 without architect or contractor, the men of the area set out the foundation of a church, and it took them a year to finish it. Since the land was low, and swampy, it was of little value for farming. In fact, since the spring thaw found it almost inundated with water, the church, located in the midst of it, was known as the Swamp Church. While St. Feehan's was under the pastoral care of the priests of Scottsville, New York, Fr. Richard Story, Fr. James O'Donoghue, and Fr. Myles Loughlin served their spiritual needs up to 1869.

The first resident pastor of Churchville, and its mission church, St. Feehan's, was the Rev. William Mulheron in June, 1873. He was succeeded the following year by the Rev. William Morrin. During these times, the means of transportation was by horse and buggy, although on occasion the priests would arrive in Chili on horseback. An Italian priest, the Rev. Angelo Lugero, was assigned to St. Feehan's for one year only, leaving a reputation for great sanctity - so much so that his blessing and touch of hand gave strength and health in many cases.

A new chapter in the history of St. Feehan's was ushered in when the Rev. Dennis J. Curran was appointed in 1882 as pastor of Churchville and Chili. An aggressive character, Father Curran immediately set out improving the Catholic life in his parishes. In Chili, he saw that the presence of the water in the spring around the church was a serious drawback; he was also aware that the people of Chili were anxious to have their own cemetery, since they were still carrying their dead to the cemetery in Scottsville. Selling the idea of moving the church location was not an easy one. It is reported that many parishioners voiced their stern dislike for moving the church to the high ground. The chief reason was because it would be farther for them to go, since they lived very close to the Church.

The church, however, was relocated, and Father Curran remained with St. Feehan's on Chestnut Ridge Road for 17 years.

Because of a steady growth of the church, in June, 1954, St. Feehan's was separated from Churchville, and given the task of standing on its own. The Rev. Donald J. Murphy, who was appointed pastor, was fortunate in receiving the help of of the Sisters of St. Joseph in opening a school in the one-time dance hall and wagon shed on Chestnut Ridge Road. Two grades, first and second, were started with the sisters in charge.

New property was secured for the eventual building of a new church, school, rectory, and convent. Land was chosen at the corner of Chestnut Ridge Road and Chili Avenue with fronts on both of those streets.

In November, 1954, the old St. Feehan's Church was repainted and redecorated for the 100th anniversary. In March, 1955, a Building Fund Appeal went out for the construction of a new church. The blessing of land on Chili Avenue at Mass celebrated by Bishop Kearney was held also in March, 1955 and the Bishop announced the new name of the parish to be St. Pius the Tenth.

Sister Mary Ellen Cragen is the principal of the school; Father John O'Connor was appointed to the parish in 1971 and has been very well received by the congregation.

**********

*First Baptist*

The First Baptist Church of Chili had its conception in private homes and in a schoolhouse not far from Chili Center. These gatherings began taking place as early as 1827. On September 16, 1834, at a meeting in the home of Joseph Champman, it was decided to take action to become a corporate body under the name of "The First Calvanistic Strict Communion Baptist Church and Society of Chili."

Four months later, a contract was signed between Zebulon Paul and Isaac Barrett of the first part and David Bangs of the second part for the erection of a church at Chili Center, where there was already a store and a tavern on one of the main stage coach routes between Rochester and Buffalo. According to the contract, the church structure was to be 40 feet wide and 54 feet long; the building was to be furnished and ready for services on December 1, 1835; the cost was to be $1,864 and the money was raised by subscription. This was the beginning of the First Baptist Church of Chili. Following are some of the more notable events as they appeared in the old record books: 1847 - Sunday School organized; 1860 - sheds were built for protection of horses and carriages; 1877 - the people had a parsonage built on Chili Avenue, and the following year erected a barn behind it. 1881 - a deed for the Grove across from the church was recorded

Continued on page 44

from page 43

in the county clerk's office in the name of the church. 1898- the church records show the name was shortened to The Chili Center Baptist Church. December, 1914 - the envelope system of collecting money was installed. By November, 1917, the new addition was completed and dedicated. In 1955, the church purchased the house across from it at the intersection of Chili and Paul Roads to be used for Sunday School activities.

First pastor of the church was Elder Samuel Carpenter from 1834 to 1836.

In 1960 plans were begun for the building of a new sanctuary and small educational wing on the Henderson property. Plans for the new building were drawn by the firm of Walzer, Miller, and Genga, and the cornerstone was laid in October, 1961. The pastor at that time was the Rev. Everett L. Waters Mr. Waters resigned in 1966, and the church called the Rev. Donnell R. Harris to become the new pastor of the First Baptist Church in the spring of 1967.

At the present time, the church is engaged in a financial campaign to raise $80,000 to expand the educational facilities. It is hoped that construction of the new educational wing can begin by late 1972 or early 1973.

**********

*Parkminster Presbyterian*

Urban renewal and the construction of Rochester's inner loop caused the demolition of the First United Presbyterian Church on Plymouth Avenue, North, in 1952. About 60 of its members established the new church on the present site at Chili Avenue and Pixley Road. The new Parkminster United Presbyterian Church was completed in 1954, financed by the sale of the demolished church. Rev. Herman King, D.D., was called as the spiritual leader from that time until his death in 1967. The congregation has grown rapidly from about 200 members in 1954 to 800 at the present time. In 1958, an educational wing was added, and the mortgage for that expansion was burned in 1965. The next important expansion period was the addition of a new, larger sanctuary, built in 1968. Rev. William Showalter, the senior minister, joined in 1968.

Mr. William Thompson was called as assistant to the minister in 1970 with special interest in the field of Christian education. Parkminster has complete programs in Christian education, including Sunday School, Youth Club, adult education, Junior and Senior High Groups, and pre-school activities.

**********

*Community Christian*

Community Christian Church was incorporated in Rochester. In 1966, the church sold its property on Columbia Avenue and Kenmore Street and purchased the present Chili Avenue site. The present structure was completed in April, 1967.

**********

*Bethany Chapel*

On September 8, 1968, several families met together for worship at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Young on Shrubbery Lane in the town of Chili. The group, sponsored by the Genesee Conference and from the Pearce Memorial Church in North Chili, soon moved into the parsonage and chapel at the intersection of Archer and Paul Raod. The people organized and incorporated during the early part of 1969, taking the name of Bethany Chapel Free Methodist Church. Construction of the church building began about January 1st, and by Easter, 1970, the doors of the church were open for services. On October 18, 1971, the new Youth building was dedicated, The church serves about 40 families with an average Sunday morning attendance of 120.

**********

*Foursquare Gospel*

The Foursquare Gospel Church at 312 Fisher Road, had its beginnings in a Bible study and prayer meeting group in the home of Chili citizens, Mr. Peter Phillippsen and the late Mrs. Peter(Pearl) Phillippsen. In 1940, Mr. Phillippsen set aside a portion of property on his farm for the erection of a building which served as Sunday school facilities. The Sunday School functioned as an independent church until May 17, 1950, when it affiliated with the International Church of the Foursquare Gospel. The current pastor, Reverend Ronald L. May, has served in this capacity since 1959. Under his leadership, the church erected new facilities last year. This church is pleased to have the distinction of being the first Pentecostal Church in Chili.

**********

*Beaver Rd. Church of Christ*

Two men, Don Atkin and Ray Schuh, set out to enlist families and aid in the summer of 1968, the first of several "Exodus" families arriving in Rochester. In December, 1968, Tom Hepner and his family arrived from Winslow, Arizona to assume responsibilities of preaching minister and minister of Christian Education for the Beaver Road Church of Christ.

The group was incorporated under state law as the Genesee Valley Church on July 2, 1968, and later changed the name to the Beaver Road Church of Christ. Meeting places were many and varied, as well as interesting. First in the homes of members, then in a rented and outdated church building on Buffalo Road that has since been torn down. On July 19, 1970 the congregation moved into their new facilities at 375 Beaver Road.

**********

*Methodist Church*

The Methodist Church in Buckbees Corners has since been torn down. It was organized in 1832. In 1852, the parish was divided and a second church was built in North Chili. In 1912, the two congregations merged once more and old South Church was demolished. In 1964 the congregation moved to their new location at Buffalo Road and Westside Drive, and the old building was torn down in 1970.

**********

There are two other religious organizations in Chili, the Ballantyne Presbyterian Church at 40 Ballantyne Road, built in 1935, and a chapter of the Jehovah's Witnesses, on Marshall Road.

This page is blank.

Published by the
Gates-Chili NEWS, Inc. June, 1972